

Thou Shalt Surely Die

By Peter Salemi

I have often made this challenge on my radio broadcast, and I will also make here in this booklet about life after death. The challenge is to find these following quotes in the Bible, and I will give 1000 dollars to anyone who can find them . “I will see you in Heaven.” “When you die you go to heaven.” “Heaven is the reward of the saved.” Or find for me in the Bible the phrase, “The Immortal Soul.” No one has come forth with the answer to my challenge, because you cannot find these phrases in the Bible. Is that strange? 2 billion Christians out there believe in the immortal soul and dying and going to heaven, yet, ITS NOT IN THE BIBLE! What is the truth? After reading this book may God open your hearts to discover the truth of your Bible!

Effects of this life

We feel that this is an important subject to look into because, whatever a person believes about death has a great effect on what he does with this life! Isn't it true! When we see Islamic terrorists blowing themselves up for the sake of advancing Islam, and believing that dying in Jihad will give them a greater place in heaven, this belief, turns into action and causes heartache, death and murder to many more people including the suicide bomber.

Same with the Kamikaze pilots of World War 2. They had the same basic beliefs of dying for their cause would give them a greater reward in the next life.

And what about the so called Christian world? Many people believe that the more they suffer in this life, the more they will enjoy heaven when they die. That's why you see many Nuns and monks denying themselves any hint of pleasure, but punishing themselves with penance etc...thinking “The more I do this the more I will enjoy Heaven.” Yes the concept of death and the belief of the afterlife effects what we do in this life. Did you know the concept of the immortal soul and going to heaven when you die immediately, is an idea that embraces death? Think of it! If you go directly to heaven when you die, why fear death? Why try and keep an injured person alive? Why postpone such a blessing? You are going to be with the Lord? Right? Why get the doctors to try and help you, and save your life? You are going to paradise, right? You see how this embraces death, AND NOT LIFE! It is a self destructing concept. And that's what Satan the devil wants you to do, die! And not live. What does God want for you however? The Apostle John writes: “Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth” (3 John 1:2). The Old Testament writes: “Ye shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God hath commanded you, that ye may live, and that it may be well with you, and that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess” (Deut 5:33). God wants us to LIVE NOT DIE! Isn't that strange coming from a God that knows that Heaven is a better place for his people? If God wanted us to go to heaven why would he write these words in his book called The Bible? Contradictory? Yes! But it contradicts *man's theories about death*, there is NO contradiction in the Bible. The bible shows that heaven is NOT the reward of the saved!

Death, Friend? or Foe?

Is death an enemy of man? From the various theories out there *by other religions* about life after death it is not. But what does the Bible say?

When you go to a funeral, the Priest or Pastor will preach the man into heaven saying, “He is gone to be with the Lord.” You see, his body was just a clay temporary home for him, and now his soul is in heaven sitting at the feet of the Master, Jesus Christ. What he is really saying, is, that this man did not really die, he just passed from one existence to another, leaving his body for the living to bury.

As I mentioned above, before that man died, he had the expensive doctors and medical equipment trying to keep him alive (in many cases), but why? If he had a far better life waiting for him why keep him alive? You’ve heard the saying “No one wants to die but everyone wants to go to Heaven.” The inconsistency what they claim to believe and what they really seem to believe as testified by their actions.

Is this because they know deep down inside, in their innermost being, that God is right that death is NOT A FRIEND BUT AN ENEMY?

“The last enemy that shall be destroyed is DEATH” (1 Corinthians 15:26).

We should not feel that we are different if we treat death as an enemy. Hezekiah, in the Old Testament knew death was NOT a friend. When Isaiah prophesied that he would die, “Hezekiah wept sore” (Isa. 38:3). He then prayed to God to spare his life, and God gave him another 15 years. Why was Hezekiah unhappy about dying? Did he not believe that he would be with God when he did die? Hezekiah himself gives the answer:

“For the *grave* cannot praise thee, death can not celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth.

“*The living, the living*, he shall praise thee, *as I do this day*: the father to the children shall make known thy truth” (Isa 28:18-19).

Hezekiah understood death to be an enemy. He believed that when he died, he would go down to the “grave,” he would not be able to praise God or hope for his truth.

The fact that death is taught as an enemy is also taught in the New Testament. Epaphroditus one of Paul’s disciples: “...was sick nigh unto death: but *God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow*” (Philippians 2:27).

Both Hezekiah and Epaphroditus would have been deprived many years of life, had not God in his mercy intervened. Their lives were spared, and they rejoiced that God added more years to their lives.

Another example showing death to be an enemy is found in Jeremiah 31:15-16: “Thus saith the LORD; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not.

“Thus saith the LORD; Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the LORD; *and they shall come again from the land of the enemy.*”

Matthew tells us that this prophecy was fulfilled when King Herod tried to kill Christ when he was born, and killed all the children 2 years old and under. These children “were not” meaning they were killed.

“The land of the enemy” is not heaven, but death, the state described by the words, “they were not.” The “not” in the Greek here is “ouk” which always expresses full and direct negation (independently and absolutely). The weaker and conditional negative was not used. The stronger negative was also used in Jeremiah 31:15.

The Bible says that Rachel shall see them when they “come again” (are resurrected) from this land of the enemy. Yes the Bible speaks about when the “...dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live....all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

“And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation [Judgement]” (John 5:25, 28-29).

Therefore we see some very Godly people who thought of death as an enemy and hated and feared it. Let’s now begin a deep search into the Bible why they felt the way they did about death.

Is there Death After Life?

In Romans 5:12 we read: “Therefore, even as though one man sin entered into the world, and through sin death, and thus death passed through into all mankind, on which all sinned” (Concordant Version).

In other words as a consequence of Adam’s sins, death has “passed through into all mankind,” and its on account of death operating in mankind that all men sin. For light on the meaning of the term “death” let us turn to the historical record of the event mentioned above in Rom 5:12.

After God formed man from the ground he placed upon him a well known restriction: “And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:

“But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” (Gen 2:16-17). The marginal reading of the last phrase is significant: “Dying thou shalt die.” In other words, the dying process (i.e. morality) was to begin to operate in Adam the very day he ate of the forbidden tree, and this was to ultimately result in his actual death.

In Genesis 3:19 the “death” which Adam ultimately was to die is graphically described: “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: *for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*”

It appears that none of the living creatures of Genesis 1 has any existence prior to their creation, and Adam had NO prior existence before God formed him from the ground and made him a “living soul” (Gen 2:7). Thus God must of meant by that last verse that when Adam died and returned unto the ground, he would return to the PREVIOUS STATE OF NON-EXISTENCE. According to the early chapters of Genesis then, death can simply be defined as the OPPOSITE OF LIFE.

If this is true, then there should be other bible passages which treat life and death as opposites. Consider the following:

1. Now when Jacob saw that there was corn in Egypt, Jacob said unto his sons, Why do ye look one upon another? And he said, Behold, I have heard that there is corn in Egypt: get you down thither, and buy for us from thence; *that we may live, and not die.* (Gen 42:1-2).

2. And Judah said unto Israel his father, Send the lad with me, and we will arise and go; *that we may live, and not die,* both we, and thou, and also our little ones. (Gen 43:8)

3. Wherefore shall we die before thine eyes, both we and our land? buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants unto Pharaoh: and give us seed, *that we may live, and not die,* that the land be not desolate. (Gen 47:19)

4. Cut ye not off the tribe of the families of the Kohathites from among the Levites: But thus do unto them, *that they may live, and not die,* when they approach unto the most holy things: Aaron and his sons shall go in, and appoint them every one to his service and to his burden: But they shall not go in to see when the holy things are covered, lest they die. (Num 4:18-20)

5. Let Reuben *live, and not die;* and let not his men be few. (Deut 33:6).

6. Until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of oil olive and of honey, *that ye may live, and not die:* and hearken not unto Hezekiah, when he persuadeth you, saying, The LORD will deliver us. (2 Kings 18:32)

7. In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order; *for thou shalt die, and not live.* (2 Kings 20:1; Isa 38:1)

8. *I shall not die, but live,* and declare the works of the LORD. (Psalm 118:17).

9. But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, *he shall surely live, he shall not die.* (Ezekiel 18:21).

10. Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, *he shall surely live, he shall not die.* (Ezekiel 18:28)

11. For the *wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.* (Rom 6:23)

The scriptures teach the Adam's sin brought death to us, and Christ's death and resurrection brought life unto us. Therefore we can conclude that death is NOT another form of life; death is the OPPOSITE of life, and in fact, death is the ABSENCE of life. The Bible has a lot more to say on this subject, let's go on.

Death Likened Unto Sleep

God inspired Moses, Job, David, Solomon, Isaiah, Daniel, Luke, Paul and Peter to refer to the death as being asleep. We read in Deuteronomy 31:16: "And the LORD said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt *sleep with thy fathers;*" But wait, didn't the apostles see Moses with Jesus on the mount of

transfiguration in Matthew 17? Does the Bible contradict? We will answer this in the argument section of this booklet.

But this same expression “slept with thy fathers,” occurs 36 times in the books of kings and Chronicles alone. Thus it would seem that God desires that his people should become familiar with this inspired phrase. However this terminology did not long survive in apostolic times. It was seldom used in the Middle Ages, during the time that Catholicism held sway. It was revived shortly during the Protestant Reformation, but it died out once again. Today we only hear it when the scriptures are read. But no one really takes notice what God is TRYING TO TELL THEM THE STATE OF THE DEAD IS! THEY ARE ASLEEP!

Let’s look at some of the scriptures the Bible writers said concerning the connection between death and sleep:

1. *So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.* (Job 14:12)
2. Consider and hear me, O LORD my God: lighten mine eyes, *lest I sleep the sleep of death;* (Psalm 13:3)
3. As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, *when I awake,* with thy likeness. (Psalm 17:15)
4. And many of them that *sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life,* and some to shame and everlasting contempt. (Dan 12:2)
5. But go thou thy way till the end be: *for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.* (Dan 12:13)
6. And why dost thou not pardon my transgression, and take away mine iniquity? *for now shall I sleep in the dust; and thou shalt seek me in the morning, but I shall not be.* (Job 7:21)

We find the same concept used throughout the New Testament as well

1. And all wept, and bewailed her: but he said, Weep not; *she is not dead, but sleepeth.* And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead. (Luke 8:52-53).
2. These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, *Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep...*Howbeit Jesus *spake of his death:* but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. (John 11:11,13)
3. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. *Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.* (1 Corith 15:16-18)
4. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits *of them that slept.* (1 Corith 15:20)
5. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which *sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.* (or, “will God, through Jesus, lead forth together with him” CV.) (1 Thess 4:15).

6. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord *shall not prevent them which are asleep.* (1 Thess 4:15).

Thus we see both Old and New Testaments describe death as the exact parallel in condition of sleep. Both in sleep and in death men are unconscious of time and events that occur around them.

Those who believe that man himself retains consciousness after death teach that consciousness is independent of the body. Thus, when the body dies, the consciousness remains unaffected. But this notion is proven daily to be false. No man remains conscious while his body sleeps, for sleep itself is an unconscious state of being.

“His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; *in that very day his thoughts perish*” (Psalm 146:4).

Some say that dreaming is proof that the thought of humans prove that the body operates independent from the body. However researchers have found that dreams occur as the physical body is disturbed.

Comas are an unnatural sleep brought on by injury, drugs, or illness. The body is alive, but decreased activity of some part of the body has made the mind unconscious. No doctor who has had medical experience would dare insist that mind’s consciousness increases as body’s life and brain function decreases.

Natural sleep, comas or other types of unconsciousness seems to verify that consciousness of the mind only exists in a LIVING BODY.

Paul admonished Timothy to “hold fast the form (“pattern”-CV) of sound words” (2 Tim 1:13). It is important that we used the inspired words of God when we speak of death, lest we should be led astray in our understanding of it.

Unconsciousness in Sheol-Hades

Many times in funerals you would hear of the person being “with the Lord,” in heaven. But are the beloved deceased truly in the presence of God in heaven as the story goes? What does the bible say about people who died? Where are they? In heaven? Hell? Purgatory? *Or as anybody can plainly see at the funeral, IN THE GRAVE?* Let’s examine the place of the death.

King Solomon wrote: “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, *nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest*” (Eccl 9:10).

King Hezekiah, a righteous man before God, see 2 Kings 20:3, when he was about to die knew where he was going and what state he would be in, that’s why he said: “*For the grave cannot praise thee, death can not celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth...The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth*” (Isa 38:18-19).

King David wrote the same thing when he said: “The dead praise not the LORD, neither any that *go down into silence*” (Psalm 115:17). The Septuagint reading of this passage is very significant: : “The dead shall not praise thee, O Lord, nor any that go down to Hades. But we, the living, will bless thee Lord, from henceforth and to the age.”

In the original Hebrew of the Old Testament scriptures the dead were said to go to Sheol* (see footnote). The comparable Greek word in the New Testament was the word Hades. When the Judean translators of the Septuagint Bible (280 B.C) came to the word Sheol, they always rendered it with the Greek Hades. When the writers of the New Scriptures quoted a passage from the Hebrew, they rendered Sheol as Hades. An example:

“For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell [Hebrew “sheol”]; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption” (Psalm 16:10).

“Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, [Greek “Hades”] neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption” (Acts 2:27).

The prophets of the Bible knew they would go to sheol, but they had faith that God would not leave them there forever. Job knew that he would have to wait in sheol till his “change come” meaning the resurrection:

“If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come” (Job 14:14).

The Septuagint of this passage is very enlightening: “For if a man should die, shall he live again? Having accomplished the days of his life? I will wait TILL I EXIST AGAIN.”

Thus according to the Septuagint translation, Job said that he would have to wait in the grave until he existed again at the resurrection. Meanwhile: “If I wait, *the grave is mine house*: I have made my bed in the darkness.” (Job 17:13). Notice that his dwelling place is the grave where he lies in darkness, the state of unconsciousness. Not a place of darkness, but his bed, where he sleeps in death, in darkness, meaning unconsciousness.

Sheol is a place of darkness and silence, but it is also a place where mental activity ceases as well.: “For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?” (Psalm 6:5).”...*his thoughts perish*” (Psalm 146:4).

Note: “Perish” in the Hebrew is “abad” which signifies “to be lost.” At death man loses consciousness.

King Solomon, the wisest man that ever lived confirmed what his father said about the dead in Ecclesiastes 9:5: “For the living know that they shall die: but the *dead know not any thing*, neither have they any more a reward;...” They DON’T have a reward. But the common belief is that when you die, you enter heaven, your eternal reward. But the Bible says otherwise.

“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, *in the grave, whither thou goest.*” (Eccl 9:10). Some people may criticize Solomon on these verses saying that at this time Solomon was “backslidden” when he wrote these things. But this book was written by “The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and that which was written was upright, even words of truth.” (Eccl 12:10). God made Solomon “wise” and “understanding heart,” (see 1 Kings 3:11, 12; 4:29-31). Not to mention that Solomon’s statements on death are in exact agreement with the statements of Job and David. Are we to say then that David and Job were backslidden as well? God forbid!

The above scriptures are not isolated passages in any way. There are many scriptures that coincide with them. God's words say that the dead lie unconscious in the graves, and are awaiting their respective resurrections. The prophets all agree on this issue, in contrast to all the false religions around them, and you can also apply it today as well. The Bible is the only religious book that says when you die you are in the grave, dead and unconscious. All other religions speak of Heaven and hell, a place where people live forever, and this happens immediately after death. They speak of Heaven as paradise, or Nirvana. They speak of hell as a place of torment where a person suffers forever and ever without any relief. Jesus as well put his stamp of approval on the truth of the prophets by telling his two disciples: "O fools slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken" (Luke 24:25).

There is only One Man that walked the earth who is immortal, and he is Jesus Christ: "...the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, who ONLY HATH IMMORTALITY" (1 Timothy 6:15,16). How can that be? What about Elijah and Enoch. Didn't they go to heaven and are living in eternity? Jesus said "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven" (John 3:13). No man has ascended up to heaven. Does the Bible contradict? Are not Elijah and Enoch up there? We will deal with these scriptures in the argument section of our article.

Death is a Return

There is a significant point that Christendom seems to have overlooked. God does not say he formed man's body of the dust of the ground. No, God says he formed MAN of the dust. Only theologians say it was the body.

Note carefully the wording of the scriptures: "And the *LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground*, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." (Gen 2:7).

That Adam was made truly of the earth is made especially clear in the Concordant Version of 1 Corinth 15:45: "The First man Adam, became a living Soul"...the first man was OUT OF the earth, soilish..."

Adam was complete physically, but he was without "life." Upon receiving life, he then became a living soul.

The important point to remember is that, except for the breathe of life itself, *man was totally from the dust of the earth.*

That is why the Bible itself states that when life leaves man, man himself returns to the dust from whence he came. Notice God's own explanation in the book of Genesis: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: *for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return*" (3:19).

"All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust" (Job 34:15).

"Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men" (Psalm 90:3).

"Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust" (Psalm 104:29).

“His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish” (Psalm 146:4)

“All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again” (Eccl 3:20).

Note the personal pronouns thy and thou in all the above passages. If our theologians and bible teachers would read them, they would see that man himself returns to the dust-not just his body with himself then going somewhere else.

But the passages say that God takes away the breathe of life, then man returns to the earth from whence he came. What is this breath of life the bible speaks of?

Breath of Life (Spirit, Soul, Body).

In any discussion of death as a return to the ground, we must consider the relationship between spirit, soul and body since Solomon did write: “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it” (Eccl 12:7).

The Hebrew word for spirit is *ruach*, and its Greek equivalent is *pneuma*. Both words literally mean “breath” (air in motion), see *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance*. In Ecclesiastes 12:7 God takes back what he gave. “...the spirit [breath i.e. Breath of Life] shall return to God who gave it.” When God breathed into man the “breath of life” (Gen 2:7), man became alive and was a living creature. Is the spirit or breath of life man? No, *the soul*, that we will discuss later constitutes the individual, and is the seat of conscious personality.

So what is this breath of life?

I will let Mr Biacchiocchi’s book “Immortality or Resurrection,” pp.49-50 describe in great detail what is the breath of life.

“What is the breath [neshamah] of life’ that God breathed into Adam’s nostrils? Some assume that the ‘breath of life’ is the immortal soul that God implanted into Adam’s material body. This interpretation cannot be legitimately be supported by the biblical meaning and usage of the ‘breath of life,’ because nowhere in the bible is the ‘breath of life’ identified with an immortal soul.

“In scripture the ‘breath [neshamah] of life’ is the life-giving power that is associated with the breath of God. Thus we read in Job 33:4: ‘The spirit [ruach] of God hath made me, and the breath [neshamah] of the Almighty hath given me life.’ The parallelism between the ‘spirit of God’ and the ‘breath of the Almighty’ suggests that the two are used interchangeably because they both refer to the gift of life imparted by God to his creatures. Another clear example is found in Isaiah 42:5: ‘Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out;...he that giveth breath [neshamah] unto the people upon it, and spirit [ruach] to them that walk therein.’ Here again the parallelism shows that breath and spirit denote the same *animating principle of life that God gives to his creatures*.

“The imagery of the ‘breath of life’ describes in a suggestive way God’s gift of life to his creatures, because breathing is a vital sign of life. A person who no longer breathes is dead. Thus it is not surprising that in scripture the life-giving spirit of God is characterized as the ‘breath of life.’ After all, breathing is a tangible manifestation of life, Job says: ‘All the while my breath [neshamah] is in me, and the spirit [ruach] of God is in my nostrils;’ (Job 27:3). Here the human ‘breath’ and the divine ‘spirit’ are equated, because breathing is seen as a manifestation of the sustaining power of

God's spirit.

“Possession of the ‘breath of life’ does not in itself confer immortality, because the bible tells us that at death ‘the breath of life’ returns to God. Life derives from God, is sustained by God, and returns to God. In describing death, Job says: ‘If he [God] should take back his spirit [ruach] to himself, and gather to himself his breath [neshamah], all flesh would perish together and man would return to the dust’ (Job 34:14-15). The same truth is expressed in Ecclesiastes 12:7: ‘Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.’ Of the flood we read: ‘And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: All in whose nostrils was the breath [neshamah] of life, of all that was in the dry land, died.’ (Gen 7:21-22).

“The fact that death is characterized as the withdrawal of the breath of life shows that the ‘breath of life’ is not an immortal spirit or soul that God confers on his creatures, but rather the gift of life which human beings possess for the duration of their earthly existence. As long as the ‘breath of life’ or spirit remains, human beings are ‘living souls.’ But when the breath departs, they become DEAD SOULS.

“The connection between the ‘breath of life’ and the ‘living soul’ becomes clear when we remember that, as Atkinsons points out ‘man’s soul is in his blood and indeed his blood is his soul. Thus he is kept in being [alive] as a living soul by the inhalation of oxygen out of the air, and medical science today knows, of course, a great deal about the connection between this intake of oxygen and blood.’ The cessation of breathing results in the death of the soul, because the blood which is equated with the soul, no longer receives the oxygen that is so vital for life. This explains why the bible refers about 13 times to human death as the death of a soul (Lev 29:28; 21:1, 11; 22:4; Num 5:2; 6:6, 11; 9:6, 7, 10; 19:11, 13; Hag 2:13).

“In the light of the preceding discussion, we conclude that ‘man became a living soul’ (KJV) at creation, not through the implantation of an immaterial, immortal soul into his material, mortal body, but through the animating principle of life (‘breath of life’) conferred on him by God Himself. In the creation account the ‘living Soul’ denotes the life principle or power that animates the human body and reveals itself in the form of conscious life” (emphasis added).

The Soul?

In the scriptures, the following identifying marks of a conscious personality are ascribed to the soul.

1 Knowledge (Joshua 23:14 ; Psalm 139:4; Proverbs 2:10; 19:2)

2 Thought (Esther 4:13; Prov 23:7; Psalm 13:2)

3 Memory (Lam 3:20; Deut 4:9; 11:18)

4 Love, Joy & Delight (Deut 6:5; 13:3; Psalm 35:9; 86:4; 94:19; Matt 22:37)

5 Bitterness, Distress, Impatience (Gen 42:21; Num 21:4; Judges 10:16; 16:16; 1 Sam 1:10; 22:2; 30:6; Psalm 143:11; Proverbs 21:23)

6 Mourning, Sorrow, Grief (Job 14:22; Jer 31:25; 1 Sam 2:33; Psalm 42:5)

7 Abhorrence, Hate (Lev 26:15; Psalm 11:5; 107:18; Isaiah 1:14)

One can see that if the above are ascribed to the soul, and the soul “dies,” see Ezekiel 18:4, 20, then the above marks of conscious personality cease, or “dies” as well.

Spirit in Man

The conscious part of the soul is also called the “spirit IN man.” The spirit is used to represent the seat of insight, feeling and reasoning...This accounts for many uses of the term ‘spirit’ in the Old and New Testaments. ‘Man’s spirit is stirred’ (Ez 2:2), or troubled (Gen 41:8); is hardened (Deut 2:30). A man being patient in spirit (Ecc 7:8)...ruling one’s spirit (Prov 25:28)...” (Immortality or Resurrection, p.97).

The two words in the Hebrew and Greek are ruach and pneuma: “For as the body without the spirit [pneuma i.e. Breath of Life] is dead, so faith without works is dead also” (James 2:26). When Jarius’ daughter was dead and Jesus raised her back to life the bible says: “And her spirit [pneuma] came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat” (Luke 8:55). We noted already that the spirit which returned was God’s breath of life that made the girl a living person again. “...the Greek noun pneuma...is used as the equivalent of the Hebrew word ruach, and means the ‘spirit’ or the breath of life from God...” (Is Your Soul Immortal, Robert Leo Odom, p.34, emphasis added).

“There is no suggestion that the spirit in man is an independent and immortal component of human nature. Rather it is the animating principle of life visible through breathing” (ibid, p.68).

The passages that speak of the soul as a seat of emotions are “interpreted by some dualists as supporting the notion of the soul being a immaterial entity attached to the body and responsible for the emotional and intellectual life of the individual. The problem with this interpretation is, as Tory Hoff explains, that ‘the soul is the ‘seat of emotions’ *no more than any other Hebrew anthropological term.*’ ...the soul is *only one* center of emotions *because the body, the heart the bowels and other parts of the body also function as emotional centers* [see Psalm 15:&; 73:21; Lam 2:11] From the biblical wholistic view of human nature, *one part of the body can often represent the whole* [including the breath or spirit in man]...emotional content of the soul is equated with the self or the person and is not an independent entity” (ibid, p.53, emphasis added).

The Spirit in man is described in a “figurative sense...is **expanded** to refer to the inner moral renewal...emotional and volitional life, thus *overlapping somewhat with the soul...*” (ibid, p.75, emphasis added)

Gen 2:7?

The best place to start about the discussion of the soul is in the beginning when God made the human race. Genesis 2:7 says: “And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and *man became a living soul.*” Man BECAME a soul, not a spirit. HE IS A SOUL, not God engendered into him an immortal soul. You and I and the rest of the human race ARE SOULS! This is what your bible is telling you. That’s why the “Soul that sinneth, it shall die” (Ezekiel 18"4). Do humans die? absolutely! That’s why Christ alone has immortality, 1 Timothy 6:16. We do not have an immortal soul, but we ARE MORTAL SOULS THAT DIE! As God told

Adam: "...for dust thou [the soul] art, and unto dust shalt thou [the soul] return." (Gen 3:19).

And the Only time we are to become immortal is at the resurrection. Paul wrote: "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, *and the dead shall be raised incorruptible*, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible *must put on incorruption*, and this mortal *must put on immortality*" (1 Corith 15:52-53). We are to PUT ON IMMORTALITY. We don't have it already inside us with an immortal soul.

The word "Soul" in the Hebrew is "Nephesh," which is used 472 times in the bible. People look at the word soul with a Greek dualistic mindset, and with this mind set will have great difficulty understanding the Biblical wholistic view of human nature.

"The body and soul are the same person seen from different perspectives...two characteristics of the same person...the body is the soul in its outward form [inwardly the seat of emotions, knowledge etc...]...The Hebrew idea of personality is that of an animated body, not (like the Greek) that of an incarnate soul...Nephesh was designed to be seen together *with the whole form of man*...man does not have [a] Nephesh [soul] he IS A Nephesh [soul]...Simply stated, 'a living soul' means 'a living being'" (ibid, pp.45-46 emphasis added).

People who want to cling to the Greek Platonic dualistic view of human nature instead of biblical wholism are left with many problems that the bible itself contradicts the dualistic view. They have to explain passages that speak of a dead person as a dead soul-nephesh (Lev 19:28; 21:1, 11; 22:4; Num 5:2; 6:6, 11; 9:6-7, 10; 19:11, 13; Haggai 2:13). For them it is inconceivable that the immortal soul could die with the body.

Also animals, they to are described as "living souls." In Genesis 1:20, 21, 24 and 30 the phrase "nephesh-hayyah" "living soul" refers to animals. But translators of the King James chose to translate these verse as "living creatures" rather than "living souls" (Gen 2:19; 9:10, 12, 15, 16; Lev 11:46).

Why did the translators do this? Because they were conditioned to believe that human beings had an immortal soul and animals did not. Norman Snaith finds this "...most reprehensible" and says, "...it is a grave reflection on the Revisers [translators of the Authorized Version] that they retained this misleading difference in translation...*The Hebrew phrase should be translated exactly the same way in both cases.* To do otherwise is to mislead all those who do not read Hebrew. There is no excuse and no proper defence" (Justice and Immortality, Scottish Journal of theology 17, 3 (Sept 1964), pp.312-313, emphasis added).

New Testament Word for Soul

The Greek word *psuche* is the *only* word that is translated "soul" in the New Testament. You will find the word 105 times in the New Testament, of which it is translated "soul" only 58 times, but can also be rendered "life" (40 times), "mind" (three times), and "heart," "heartily," "us" and "you" (one time each).

The Greek word *psuche* is the *exact* Greek rendering of the Hebrew word *nephesh* and is used in the same way throughout the New Testament.

For example, *psuche* is used of the *lower animals*, just as you have seen *nephesh* used of lower life forms in the first chapter of the book of Genesis! In Revelation 8:9, the Greek word *psuche* (remember this is the ONLY word which is ever used for the word “soul” in the English language) is rendered “life.” Notice also Revelation 16:3, where lower life forms are spoken of, yet the word “soul” is used. Read that last scripture carefully! It describes one of the horrible plagues yet to fall upon the land and the sea, and says “every living soul DIED”! Here is one more *New Testament* proof that the word “soul” as it found its way into the *English* language means a *being, or living thing*, which can DIE! In this case, it is used of various forms of life (of which there are *thousands*) in the sea!

The Greek word *psuche* is also used for an *individual* On many occasions, when a newspaper headline speaks of so many “souls” being lost in the sinking of a ship, it is using the word in much the same way as it occurs 14 different times in the Bible! For proof, read Acts 2:41-43; 3:23; 7:14; 27:37; Romans 2:9; 13: 1; I Corinthians 15:45; James 5:20; I Peter 3:20; II Peter 2:14; Revelation 6:9; 18:13; 20:4.

In those passages, the Greek word *psuche* is used for the *life of man*, which can be *destroyed, or lost*.

A classic example of where the translators have *tampered* with the *English* in translating from the *Greek* is found in Matthew 16:25 and 26.

Notice the way it is rendered in the King James Version: “For whosoever will save his *life* [*psuche*] shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life [*psuche*] for my sake shall find it.

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul [*psuche*]? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul [*psuche*]?”

Obviously, since the *identical* Greek word is used in both passages; and since it is rendered *differently* in verse 26 (soul) from the way it is used in verse 25 (life), it was a translator’s *decision* as to *changing* the way he rendered this Greek word *psuche* in the two verses!

To be *honest*, and to *be fair* with the word, it should have been rendered *the same* in both passages! Here, it is obvious the word should better be rendered “*life*,” just as it *was* rendered in verse 25! For, after all, it is your *life* you can lose—and what can you give in exchange for your LIFE?

The point is, the Greek word *psuche* is capable of nearly as many applications as is the Hebrew word *nephesh*, and can even be used of man’s moods, passions and feelings!

The word *psuche*, for example, is translated “mind,” “us,” “you” “heart” and “heartily.”

By no stretch of the imagination can this Greek word EVER connote anything which is *immortal*, or “extra physical, “ in the sense of being *spiritual*.

The *English* word “soul” in the Old Testament is always taken from the Hebrew *nephesh* and does NOT mean anything immortal; just as the English word “soul” in the New Testament is taken from the *Greek word psuche*, and only means *mortal*, temporal, human physical MAN, who is subject to *death*

Resurrection: Impossible if Dead are Alive

Resurrection is a RETURN from the dead. God says nothing about resurrecting men's spirit's out of heaven. It is axiomatic that the living cannot be resurrected, for only the dead can be raised from the dead. The story of man's life death and resurrection is summed up in Psalm 104:29-30: "Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled: thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust... Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth."

In other words, God removes his breath [spirit] from man, he dies and returns to the earth. The resurrection is a re-creation from the state of non-existence. In this way the earth and man will be renewed. Ezekiel says the same thing: "the breath came into them, and they lived,...Behold, O my people, I will open your graves,...And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live," (37:10, 12, 14).

Note three important things in this scripture, all of which are generally overlooked:

1. Breath came into them and they lived. It does not say-nor is it true that a "never dying soul," or a conscious entity returned to their bodies and caused them to live.
2. God says, I will...put my spirit [breath of God] in you, and ye shall live. What cause them to live? The first part says it was "breath" and the last part says "my Spirit;" the breath of God breathed into their nostrils as with Adam in Genesis 2:7.

The most complete set of references to the word resurrection that we know is found in Young's Analytical Concordance and Strong's Exhaustive as well. Here are the complete references in the New Testament of the resurrection: Matthew 22:23, 28, 30, 31; Mark 12:18, 23; Luke 14:14; 20:27, 33, 35, 36; John 5:29; 11:24, 25; Acts 1:22; 2:31; 4:2, 33; 17:18, 32; 23:6, 8; 24:15, 21; Romans 1:4; 6:5; 1 Corinth 15:12, 13, 21, 42; Phil 3:10, 11; 2 Tim 2:18; Heb 6:2; 11:35; 1 Peter 1:3; 3:21; Rev 20:5, 6; and Matthew 27:53.

The above references speak of "the resurrection," the "resurrection of Jesus Christ," and most frequently, "the resurrection of [or from] the dead." You may be surprised to hear that no single instance do we read of the Resurrection of the body. *Meaning the body and the soul separate*. When the bible speaks of the body, it is biblical wholism that we have seen which constitutes *the whole person*. Here are some examples

In Isaiah 26:19 we read: "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust:..." The first part of this verse speaks of "thy dead men," not "the bodies of those who have died." The last part of the same verse says, "ye that dwell in the dust;" not "the bodies of them that dwell in the dust." These two parts of the same sentence do not mention "bodies" at all.

"My dead body" does not suggest that Isaiah's body will just be raised, while his soul or spirit comes down from heaven and re-enters his body. This passage simply illustrates that one cannot separate the body from the person. Isaiah equates himself his body with the dead MEN. This is biblical wholism which we have seen shows that you cannot separate the person from his body.

Notice the Apostle, how he also equates our bodies with our being, the person as biblical wholism: "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption:

“It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power:

“It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.

“And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a *living soul*; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit” (1 Corinth 15:42-45). Do you see how the Apostle Paul wrote about the body and then Adam, and how he became a “living Soul” or being which constitutes the whole person as we have seen above.

Two Types of Death

We have seen in Genesis 2:16-17 that the penalty for Adam’s transgression was mortality, that is, a dying process. We have also seen according to Romans 5:12, that this mortality was passed down to all men as a consequence to Adam’s sin, rather than our own. In other words God did not wait until we committed our first sin to make us mortal. Rather we are all born mortal, not as a result of our own sin, but as a result of Adam’s sin.

Therefore this type of death which we call mortality is experienced by all meaning indeed by all creation.

“For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast: for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again” (Eccl 3:19-20).

However there is another kind of death that ONLY the wicked unrepentant sinner will experience. It is called the second death: “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death....And the sea gave up the dead [third resurrection] which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

“And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

“And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Rev 21:8; 20:13-15).

The righteous shall not experience the second death. They will be resurrected to eternal life: “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

“But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.

“Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on ***such the second death hath no power***, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years” (Rev 20:4-6). The second death has no power because they will have received eternal life when they

are “raised incorruptible” (1 Corinth 15:50:52). This is the first resurrection of all people that are chosen by God and “endured unto the end” (Matthew 24:13). *The second death comes at the third resurrection.*

The second resurrection is the resurrection all people who never had a chance for salvation. This is the “rest of the dead.” These are the ones who never heard the name of Jesus Christ. They never had the truth revealed to them. Or maybe they were little babies who were killed or died of malnutrition that never got a chance to be saved. Whatever the situation, these will finally get a chance to know God, and to begin the process of salvation in their lives and to get to know the true God of the Bible. This is the time of Judgment. Right now, the Judgment is for God’s people being Judged right now according to their works. Peter writes: “For the time is come that *judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us*, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? [willingly reject God’s truth]” (1 Peter 4:17). God judges his people. The bible is very clear on this point: “For the LORD shall judge his people,” (Deut 32:36).

Many people believe that the time of Judgment is for the wicked when they receive their sentence to the lake of fire. But this contradicts the scripture: “Therefore the ***ungodly shall not stand in the judgment***, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.” (Psalm 1:5). The ungodly, the Bible says will not stand in the Judgment. Only repentant sinners will stand in the judgement who have been made right through the blood of Jesus Christ. The Church now and in the future, the book of revelation writes: “What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?”

“And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

“Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

“They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

“For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes....And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.” (Rev 7:13-17;19:8). These are repentant sinners who are made righteous by the blood of Jesus Christ and are saved. The church today is “Much more then, being now justified [made right] by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him” (Rom 5:9). The church is being judged as Peter said right now and we are righteous before God through the blood of Jesus Christ. So the Church is standing in the judgement right now righteous before God and not ungodly, for the “ungodly shall not stand in the judgment.”

What is Judgement?

Jesus addressed the fact of more than one resurrection when He said that “the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation [or judgment]” (John 5:28-29).

The more common meaning of the word *krisis*, translated “condemnation” in this verse, is judgment, as it is usually translated. This word refers to a process of evaluation rather than an act of punishment. *Krisis* means “the process of investigation, the act of distinguishing and separating, . . . a judging, a passing of judgment upon a person or thing” (W.E. Vine, *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, 1985, p. 119). *Krisis is to be distinguished from krima, which refers to “the sentence pronounced, a verdict, a condemnation, the decision resulting from an investigation” (ibid.).*

*Notice the scripture: “”But when **we are judged**, we are **chastened of the Lord**, that we should not be **condemned** with the world” (1 Corinthians 11:32)*

The Old Testament says the same thing in Psalms 94:12 “Blessed *is* the man whom thou chastenest (**Heb. yacar-correct**), O LORD, and teachest him out of thy law;”

As we saw earlier, those who are called in this life and respond by hearing and believing God will be given eternal life; it will not be necessary for them to go through this time of judgment (verse 24). They are being judged now (1 Peter 4:17), not later. This judgment is a process, with those who are called by God responding faithfully to His truth and bearing fruit over time (John 15:2-8; Galatians 5:22-23)-or turning from that calling (2 Peter 2:20-22).

Eventually all others will be judged, “for God will bring every work into judgment, including every secret thing, whether good or evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:14). This judgment will also take place over time in the “resurrection of judgment” of which Christ spoke.

Now, the second resurrection, we see: “And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.

“ *And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the **dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.**” (Rev 20:11-12). Notice all people are standing before God, and these dead people who are back to life, meaning the resurrection, were in that time being “judged” by the “books.” What are those books? How is the church being Judged today? By the Bible! The bible is composed of 66 books! The Greek word is *biblos*, the very word used to describe the bible. The Book of Life is also opened, so each one who repents their names shall be written in the book of life, just like the church when they repent and follow God, their names in are in the book of life as well, see Rev 13:8. These in the second resurrection, will repent, be in the book of life, and shall be judged according to their works. They are righteous before God, and repentant, as David said, ““ungodly shall not stand in the judgment.” (Psalm 1:5).*

Jesus spoke of the Judgement and the attitudes of the people at that time: “The men of Nineveh **shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it**: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.

“The queen of the south **shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it**: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here.” (Matthew 12:41-42). Notice, they are condemning the ones who rejected Christ IN THIS LIFE! They know God’s truth, they know right from wrong. How are they able to do that unless they first learn about what is written in the “books.” They need time learn God’s laws, and about God’s mercy, and time to learn what the ancient peoples did in that time for them to

reach the conclusion to condemn peoples actions.

Notice further: “Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah *in the day of judgment*, than for that city [who rejected his teachings]...Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

“But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon *at the day of judgment*, than for you.” (Matthew 10:15; 11:21, 22). In the day of Judgement these people will accept the teachings and mighty works of Christ and find their judgement period more bearable than those who personally heard Jesus Christ. Jesus simply meant here is that all these people will find repentance easier in their day of Judgement than those who rejected Christ and his Gospel message

The time of Judgement is a time when people will walk in God’s way and at the end of it-then God will render a decision, a verdict-for each, on the basis of how they do. This is the Judgement! Some people believe that the judgement is merely reviewing the people’s sins and pronouncing a punishment on them. But “judgement” as used in the bible, is actually a process not just the conclusion. God’s people are being judged right now, 1Peter 4:17; Deut 32:36. God evaluates how well they live by his instructions: “But when *we are judged*, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be *condemned* with the world” (1 Corinthians 11:32). Notice when we are judged by God it is so that we might *avoid* condemnation. Then if we reject God and his laws and prefer to be evil and sinners, at the end of the process in the THIRD RESURRECTION (see below) people who refuse to repent will receive their punishment.

Jesus said: “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

“And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life [First resurrection to life eternal]; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation [should be translated “Judgement” The Second Resurrection].” (John 5:29).

Now when we get to Rev 20:13-15 we read of the third resurrection the time of the second death: “And the sea gave up the dead [third resurrection] which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged [i.e. the “Krima” “Judgement” “the sentence pronounced, a verdict, a condemnation, the decision resulting from an investigation” (Vine’s).] every man according to their works.

“And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

“And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”

Notice the book of life is not mentioned in these passages. Why? They must of had their chance for salvation and rejected it. These people God will judge, sentence and execute: “And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

“And whosoever was not *found written in the book of life* was cast into the lake of fire.”

There are scriptures in the bible that show that you can loose salvation, and that is totally up to the individual. The result without repentance is the lake of fire: “Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:

“When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.

“ Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways.

“ *So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.*)

“ ***Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.***

“ But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; ***lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.***

“ For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end;

“ While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.

“ For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.

“ ***But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?***

“ ***And to whom swear he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?***

“ ***So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.***

“ Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

“ For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.” (Hebrews 3:-8-4:2). The apostle Paul speaking to believers who know the truth using the example of Moses in the wilderness showing that because they disbelieved and fell away from God they could not go into the promise land. And then he says the same can happen to us. We will die and not enter into the kingdom of God [the rest, see Isaiah 11:10]. This is the second death.

“For it is impossible for those who ***were once enlightened***, and have tasted of the ***heavenly gift***, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,

“And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,

“ ***If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance***; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

“ For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God:

“ ***But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected***, and is nigh unto cursing; ***whose end is to be burned***” (Hebrews 6:4-8). The fruits which we produce, righteousness in our lives, will either be gathered and enter into God’s kingdom and the ones who will not produce the fruits of righteousness will be burned in the lake of fire if they do not repent, see Matthew 3:8,10-12;7:16-20;

2 Corinth 9:10. So if we reject the calling of Jesus Christ, his truth revealed to us, and begotten by the Holy Spirit, then we can lose salvation and be part of the second death.

Some people take this scripture to show the time of Judgment is a time of punishment: "... reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:" (2 Peter 2:9). But the NIV translation renders it "unrighteous for punishment UNTIL the day of judgement." The Jewish New Testament renders this passage: "holds the wicked UNTIL the day of judgement *while continuing to punish them.*" When you look at the context of the scripture Peter is speaking of the past acts of God. Of what he did with Noah, saving him, and punishing the wicked in the flood. Also Lot, saving him and his family, but PUNISHING Sodom for their sins. Peter said, "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations.." (2 Peter 2:9). He saved Lot and Noah, and punished the wicked. So the context of the scripture is, those people, like Jesus said in Matthew 10, 11 & 12, Sodom and Gomorrah, God will reserve "UNTIL the day of Judgement," "while" God still in this life, "continues to punish them" for their wickedness. (Jewish New Testament).

Objections Answered

Now we are going to go through some of the so called proof texts that people used to try and prove that we have an immortal soul and that when we die we either go to heaven or to hell.

1. Rachel's Soul Departs (Gen 35:18).

"And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin." The NIV correctly renders it, "As she BREATHED her last-for she was dying." As we have shown, the dying process is the exact opposite of living. God "breathed" into the nostrils of Adam, and he became a living soul." At death the body returns to the earth, Gen 3:19, and the "breath" returns to God who Gave it, see Ecclesiastes 12:7.

"When there is a 'departing' (Gen 35:18) of the *nephesh* from a man, or of its 'return' (Lam 1:1), the basic idea of the concrete notion of the ceasing and restoration of breathing...*The phrase 'her soul was departing' most likely means that her 'breathing was stopping,' or we might say she was taking her last sigh. It is important to note that the noun 'soul-nephesh' derives from the verb by the same root which means 'to breath' to 'respire,' 'to draw breath.'*" (Immortality or Resurrection, Biacchiocchi, p.56, emphasis added).

2. The Soul of the Widows Son 1 Kings 17:21-22

"And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again.

"And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived."

This passage is similar to Rachel in Genesis 35:18. "The translators of the NIV understood the phrase by rendering it as 'the boy's life returned to him' (ibid, p.57). Elijah was praying for the Life, the Breath of Life, that life principle that Gave Adam his ability to come alive and become a living soul, or being.

Another indication that shows that he was praying for the Breath of Life from God to return to the boy so he can become alive again is, “[in the] Hebrew verse 21 literally reads: ‘Let this child’s soul come into his inwards parts again.’ This reading, which is found in the margin of the A.V., puts a different construction on the passage. *What returns to the inward parts is breathing. The soul as such is never connected with some ‘inward’ organs of the body.* The return of breathing in the inner parts results in the revival of the body, or, we might say, the body becoming again a living soul” (ibid, p.57, emphasis added).

3.Samuel’s Resurrection 1 Samuel 28:7-20

In this passage God refused to answer Saul’s prayer, so Saul went to the witch at Endor and asked her: “I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me him up, whom I shall name unto thee.” (v.8).

When the witch asked who he wanted to bring up, Saul said “Bring me up Samuel”(v.11). It appears from the next verses that Saul did not see anyone and asked the witch who she saw, and she said, “An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul *perceived* that it was Samuel,” (v.14). Saul “perceived” from her description that it was Samuel, *not from what he saw himself* but from the description of the witch, which led him to another error, accepting the voice as that of Samuel. I Chronicles 10:13 tell us plainly that Saul had inquired after a familiar spirit and NOT of Samuel the prophet: “So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the LORD, even against the word of the LORD, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had *a familiar spirit, to inquire of it;*” Scripture says that Saul died for consulting a familiar spirit which is against God’s law (Deut 18:10-14). The witch deceived Saul into thinking that it was Samuel, just like Mediums and Spiritist do today.

4.Elijah’s trip into Heaven 2 Kings 2:11

“And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.”

Many people use this scripture to justify the belief that when we die we go to heaven. But wait! Doesn’t this contradict what Jesus said? “And no man *hath ascended up to heaven*, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven” (John 3:13). No man has ascended to heaven. Does the Bible contradict? Absolutely not! *When man’s ideas are trying to be worked into the bible, then you get contradictions.* There is no contradiction here when we examine the scripture about Elijah.

The word heaven used here is from the Hebrew *shamayim* meaning “the Heavens, the sky or the atmosphere.” The word is used in Genesis 1:7-8, where God placed the water above and below the firmament and then God called the Firmament Heaven. In other words God said that there was water *above and below the Heavens.*

Elijah, contrary to popular opinion did not ride on a chariot to heaven. The account says that the chariot “parted them asunder.” After Elisha was some distance away that Elijah “went up by a whirlwind” (or tempest, not the chariot of fire). Since there is no wind in outer space, the whirlwind could hardly have transported Elijah all the way to heaven.

Thus the heaven that Elijah went was simply above ground, the “sky” to use the modern term.

Question? Why is it, after this event that the prophets of Israel were looking for him, and Elisha even gave them permission to look for Elijah? If they knew he went to heaven, why would they come up with the notion to look for him on earth?

“And when the sons of the prophets which were to view at Jericho saw him, they said, The spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha. And they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him.

“ And they said unto him, Behold now, there be with thy servants fifty strong men; let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master: lest peradventure *the spirit of the LORD hath taken him up, and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley.* And he said, Ye shall not send.

“ And when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said, Send. They sent therefore fifty men; and they sought three days, but found him not.” (vv.15-17). Why look for him? These were men of God? It did not even come into their minds about him going to heaven. If they did not believe you go to heaven when we die, then why should we?

The Bible even records that Elijah was still on this earth 20 years later during the days of King Jehoram: “And there came a writing to him from Elijah the prophet, saying, Thus saith the LORD God of David thy father, Because thou hast not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat thy father, nor in the ways of Asa king of Judah,” (2 Chronicles 21:12). As one can plainly see, Elijah was not dead nor in heaven at this time. The letter shows us that Elijah (1) was still in this earth and (2) he was acquainted with temporary events.

5.Isaiah’s Soul an Body Isaiah 10:18,

“And shall consume the glory of his forest, and of his fruitful field, both soul and body: and they shall be as when a standardbearer fainteth.”

First we must notice the both soul and body will be CONSUMED. So first, the passage does not suggest an immortal soul. Now Who is this person that Isaiah is speaking of? Well, he is speaking of the Assyrian that will put Israel in slavery and captivity at Jesus second coming (v.12). He is the Beast of prophecy that will be thrown into the lake of fire (Rev 20:10). See our book Germany in Prophecy for details about the Assyrian and the Beast.

Now as mentioned above the body and soul cannot be separated into two separate entities. “In the Old Testament the soul and body are two manifestations of the same person. The soul INCLUDES and presumes the body” (ibid, p.54, emphasis added). In fact, Mork writes, “the ancient Hebrews *could not conceive of one without the other. Here was no Greek dichotomy of soul and body, of two opposing substances* but a unity, man, who is bashar [body] from one aspect and nephesh [soul] from another. Bashar then, is the concrete reality of human existence, nephesh is the personality of human existence” (The Biblical Meaning of Man (note 13), p.41, emphasis added).

Now Jesus made the statement in Matthew 10:28: “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body [physical life now and in the end time as demonstrated in the Old Testament] in hell [Gahenna].” Now the Assyrian or the Beast will be thrown into the Gahenna fire, see Rev 20:10.

The Greek word “psuche” has been translated “soul” in this text, but in forty other texts it has been translated “life.” For example, Jesus said, “Whosoever shall lose his life (psuche) for my sake shall

find it.” Matthew 16:25. Obviously “psuche” could not mean soul in this instance, or people could be said to lose their soul for Christ’s sake. It is properly translated “life. “

But what of Matthew 10:28? Put in the word “life” instead of “soul” and the text makes perfect sense in its consistency with the rest of the Bible. The contrast is between one who can take the physical life, and He who can take away eternal life. Here is proof in the words of Jesus: “And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell.” Luke 12:4, 5.

In other words, the word “soul” here means not only life, but eternal life. Notice that Luke says everything just like Matthew except that he does not say “kills the soul.” Instead he says “cast into hell.” They mean the same thing. Men can only kill the body and take away the physical life. God will cast into hell and take away eternal life. Not only will their bodies be destroyed in that fire, but their lives will be snuffed out for all eternity.

Biacchiocci comes to the same conclusion: “To kill the body means to *take the present life on earth*. But this does not kill the soul, that is the eternal life received by those who have accepted Christ’s provision of salvation...all the dead will be resurrected on the last day, as they lie in their graves their soul, that is their life that they have lived for or against Jesus Christ, is still awaiting its final destiny; eternal salvation for believers and eternal destruction for unbelievers. *The latter is the destruction of body and soul in hell that Jesus warned about*” (ibid, p.88, emphasis added).

This is what Isaiah is saying in this passage which is clearly shown in Rev 20:10. God kills the the Assyrians physical life and eternal life in Gahenna fire.

6.Enoch: Dead or Alive? (Gen 5:24; Hebrews 11:5)

“And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him...By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.” Again people interpret this to mean that Enoch was translated into heaven. Yet Jesus said no man has ascended to heaven John 3:13. And twice in the 11th chapter of Hebrews it says, “These all died in faith, [including Enoch] *not having received the promises,*” (v.13) Does scripture contradict? No! Again this is man’s beliefs trying to work it into scripture.

Let’s examine these passages to prove to you that Enoch, like the rest, will be resurrected.

Your Bible plainly says he died! Hebrew 11:13. So what does it mean that Encoh “did not see death”?

The Geek word “metatithemi” meaning “translated” is also found in Acts 7:16; Galatians 1:6; Hebrews 7:12; Hebrews 11:5 (twice) and Jude 4.

This word means “carried over-Removed”! Notice Acts 7:16 using the identical Greek word: “And were carried [metatithemi] over into Sychem, and laid in the sepulchre that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Emmor the father of Sychem.” Here the very word “translated” is used as “carried over” concerning the bodies of Jacob and others of the fathers.

Now notice the next example: “I marvel that ye are so soon removed [metatithemi] from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel.” (Gal 1:6). Notice how none of these expressions have anything to do about being taken up to heaven. The other examples show a substituting or a changing.

Now notice, the Apostle Paul said “he was not found.” Why was he not found? **Because there were those who were looking for him!** Why?

Enoch “walked with God” and because of this “God took him.” But where? It does not say Heaven. Jesus said no man has ascended to heaven, John 3:13. People were looking for him on earth and they could not find him. Where did God take him? The Bible just does not say, but why did God take him? Who was looking for him? During the time before the flood Enoch walked with God, and those looking for him, were people that were going Satan’s way, the enemies of God and his prophets. We are given none of the details, but it is interesting to note that Jude quotes Enoch saying: “And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, [Satan inspired false prophets and followers] saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints,

“To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are *ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.*” (14-15). Enoch was one of God’s prophets living in a violent time Gen 6:11, a sinful period and he was preaching the Gospel as a witness and a warning to those sinful satanic people. So why did God take him? God took him or REMOVED HIM AWAY FROM those people who were LOOKING FOR HIM TO KILL HIM! God decided to spare his life from murder at the hands of these antagonists, just like Elijah!

God “took him away” and “he was not found” (by those who were looking for him). Then obviously at some later date Enoch died and is in the grave and he is awaiting his resurrection!

7. Moses and Elijah on the Mount Matthew 17:1-3

And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart,

“And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.”

“And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.”

This a favourite passage of those who try and prove that we die and go to heaven, we have to look no further than the immediate text to dispel that belief.

“And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, ***Tell the vision to no man,*** until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.” The disciples saw a VISION of the future kingdom and the glorification of Jesus Christ in the Kingdom. Moses and Elijah appear with Christ in the vision in Christ’s post resurrected state showing that Jesus fulfilled both the Law (Moses) and the prophets (Elijah). He would be exalted and glorified. Moses and Elijah appeared not in person but in vision. Just before Jesus said about his glory: “For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

“ Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom. (Matthew 16:27-28). Jesus promised that his disciples would see him in glory in his kingdom before they died, and they did in the vision.

8. Not the God of the Dead (Matthew 22:29-32)

Some who insist that Jesus taught that the dead are alive quote half of Matthew 22:32 to prove their point: “God is not the God of the dead but of the living.”

Like other arguments where part of the passage is used, we must read more to find out the truth. Verse 23 tells us to whom Jesus was speaking and what they believed: “The same day came to him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection.” With this in mind let’s read the whole passage:

“Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.

“ For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven [asexual].

“ *But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying,*

“ I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.” (vv.29-32).

Thus Jesus was refuting the Sadducees’ doctrine that there is no resurrection of the dead. He is not attempting to prove that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were alive right now, but that there WILL BE a resurrection from the dead. This has to happen in order for God to be their God. *The Companion Bible* concurs with this interpretation in its comment on the passage: “The only conclusion being that they must rise and live again in the resurrection in order that he may be their God.”

9. Thief on the Cross Luke 23:43

“And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise. Many use this verse to support their position that the dead are really alive. However the context proves otherwise.. The thief just asked Jesus to remember him when he came into his kingdom.

“And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me *when thou comest into thy kingdom*” (v.42).

It is obvious that Jesus was not on his way to his kingdom as he was hanging on the cross. In his first advent he came to die: His second advent he will come to claim his kingdom. At his present time, Jesus still has not come as the triumphant conqueror to set up his kingdom and reign on this earth with his chosen (Rev 5:10). The Thief was “thinking of the time in the distant future when Christ would return in glory to establish His kingdom upon the earth.” (Is your Soul Immortal, by Robert Leo Odom, p.92). Thus when the thief asked to remember him in the kingdom, Jesus assured him that he would be with him in paradise.

Did Jesus side step the thief’s question? Or is it possible that he understood the kingdom and paradise to be IDENTICAL? Isaiah 51:3 reads:

“For the LORD shall comfort Zion: he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the LORD; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving, and the voice of melody.”

The Septuagint renders it this way:

“And I will be comforting you, O Zion, and I comfort all her deserts, and I will place her deserts as PARADISE and he wilderness as the LORD’S PARADISE. They shall find gladness and exultation in her, confession and the voice of praise.”

The Septuagint version is very important to our study, because it shows how the Judeans two centuries before Christ used the word paradise in translating the Old Testament. We see from the above that they used the word paradise in place of Eden and the garden of the Lord. The word paradise obviously was a reference to the Garden of Eden. It was used to describe the original condition of the earth before sin entered. It was also used to describe the future, perfected Kingdom of God, when the earth would again become a “Paradise.” The Septuagint Version is the version of the Bible that they used in Palestine in Jesus day!

The Apostle Paul knew a man who went to paradise:

“It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;)

How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.” (2 Corinth 12:1-4).

This passage as well is used to prove that someone went to heaven or paradise when he died. *But if the man had died, he would not have been able to tell Paul of the experience.* Verse One makes it clear that Paul was speaking of “visions and revelations of the Lord.”

Thus the man had a vision of paradise. He went there in the “spirit” only, as John did (Rev 1:10). He saw paradise, the Kingdom of God in its restored condition, which the elect will inherit at the resurrection.

But how can we reconcile this with Jesus seeming to say that they both would be in paradise on the day of their crucifixion? Luke 23:43 as written in most modern version appears to teach just that:

“And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise”

However a study of the original Greek text tells a different story. The following is the Greek with the literal English Translation:

“To you I am saying TODAY with me you will be in the paradise [Kingdom of God]”

You will notice that it reads “saying today” rather than “you will be today in the paradise.” In other words, Jesus told the dying thief THAT DAY: “You will be with me in paradise” (The future kingdom). Thus Rotherham’s Emphasized Bible renders’ this verse:

“And he said unto him Verily I say unto thee *this day*: With me thou shalt be in paradise.”

The Concordant Literal New Testament reads:

“And Jesus said to him, “Verily, *to you am I saying today*, with me shall you be in paradise.”

And George M. Lamsa, in his translation of the New Testament from Aramaic sources, renders it as follows: “Truly I say to you today, You will be with Me in Paradise.”

Also, “In the original text of the Bible *there was no such punctuation between words as we have today in the English translation*. The translators, *supposing that men go either to heaven or to torment immediately after death, inserted a comma before the word “today,”* so as to make *Jesus say it that way*. This is obviously an error.” (ibid, p.92, emphasis added).

The phrase “to you I am saying today” may sound strange to our ears today. However, there were many occasions in the scriptures when “today” or “this day” was used to emphasize a noteworthy day. For example Moses told Israel:

“See, I have set before thee *this day* life and good, and death and evil; In that I command thee this day to love the LORD thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the LORD thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it.” (Deut 30:15-16).

The Companion Bible agrees in its notation on Luke 23:43-Today. Connect with this “I say,” to emphasize the *solemnity of the occasion*; not “shalt thou be.”

Thus we conclude that Luke 23:43 teaches that the repentant thief on the cross shall receive a place in the Kingdom of God at the resurrection. The passage cannot be used to prove that the thief was alive that same day in paradise in Heaven.

Did Jesus lie? John 20:17 — “Jesus said, Touch me not; for *I am not yet ascended to my Father:*” Wait! **This was three days and three nights later!** *Did Jesus lie to the thief on the cross saying “To day shalt thou be with me in paradise”?* Does the Bible contradict? No! As noted above he promised him a place in the future kingdom. “On that very day when he asked this of Jesus, the Saviour *assured him that his petition would be granted.*” (ibid, p.92, emphasis added).

10. Spirits in Prison (1 Peter 3:18-20)

“For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

“ By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;

“Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.”

The passage is often taken to mean that Jesus went to hell and preached to the people there and then led them into heaven. But it does not say that. First of all “went and” does not appear in the original Greek texts, but was added by the translators.

Also the word “preached” does not mean some sort of revival sermon . The word come from the Greek “kerusso,” which means to “cry or proclaim as a herald” (Young’s). This proclamation was made to the “spirits in prison,” not to men’s souls in hell. Men are never called spirits in the Bible. They are always called souls, as it is said of Noah and his family in the same passage: “eight souls were saved by water.”

Some may object to this on the grounds that Hebrews 12:23, that speaks of, “the spirits of just men made perfect.” However the context of that verse shows that it is speaking of the “church,” the true Christians whose spirits are perfected are matured. The bible speaks of the human spirit, or mind which are being perfected with the mind of God, and obedience to his laws.

The “spirits in prison” are spirit beings that Peter wrote of are probably the same ones spoken of in Jude 6: “And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.”

In Peter’s second epistle he mentions these spirits in prison again: “For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell [Greek, “Tartarus”], and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

“And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;.” (2 Peter 2:4-5).

We do not propose to explain when or how these “angels” or “spirits” were imprisoned in chains of darkness. But the context clearly shows that Peter was not speaking of souls in Hades. These were spirits in hell, the Greek word is “Tartarus.” Tartarus means a “condition of restraint.” They are locked in the chains of darkness on this earth until the second coming of Christ.

11. 1 Peter 4:6 Gospel preach also unto them that are Dead

“For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.”

Some cite this as proof that Jesus went to Hades and preached to them that are dead. However Christ’s name is not mentioned here, and the passage is really referring to people who have heard the Gospel before they died and are dead now.

The key to understanding this, is that the Gospel has been preached to the world since Adam, (Acts 14:17; Psalm 19:1). God himself: “preached before the Gospel unto Abraham” (Gal 3:8). All of the Old Testament prophets preached the Gospel, “For unto us was the gospel preached, *as well as unto them*: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it” (Heb 4:2).

12. He Led Captivity Captive (Ephesians 4:8)

Many people quote this passage to say that Jesus after the resurrection went to Hades or hell and took all the Old Testament prophets with him to Heaven.

“Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.”

This verse is obviously a verse about the ascension of Christ. But there are some questions we need to ask first.

(1) What were the gifts he gave to men, and to whom did he give them? (2) What was the captivity that he led captive?

Before we answer these questions we must realize that Paul was simply quoting from the book of Psalms. This is the original text he was quoting: “Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the *rebellious also*, that the LORD God might dwell among them” (Psalm 68:18). Those who teach that these gifts were given to them when they entered heaven fall flat when we see the scripture that includes the “rebellious also.”

We can be sure that the rebellious did not go to heaven with the believers. So there must be another answer to our first question: what were the gifts that Christ gave towards these men? Paul gives the answer a few verses later: “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

“For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: (Eph 4:11-12). This passage makes it abundantly clear, why the “rebellious also,” were to receive these gifts. We are all rebellious people, and for this reason God gave us (as gifts) apostles, evangelists, prophets, pastors and teachers, “*for the perfecting of the saints.*”

Why does God want the saints perfected? So “that the LORD God might dwell among them.” When the bride has made herself ready (Rev 19:7), then Christ shall come to earth and dwell with her: “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, *and he will dwell with them*, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God” (Rev 21:3).

Therefore to answer our first question, when Christ ascended into heaven *he gave us ministers to perfect the saints.*

Our second question was: What does it mean to “lead captivity captive”? Does it mean Christ led believers to heaven? Not at all!

“Led Captivity Captive” is an old expression that meant that people had been freed from captivity. This phrase occurs in Judges 5:12 in the song Deborah sang after Barak delivered Israel from the Captivity of the Canaanites: “Awake, awake, Deborah: awake, awake, utter a song: arise, Barak, and *lead thy captivity captive*, thou son of Abinoam.”

Barak freed Israel from Canaanite captivity. In Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, he said Christ legally freed us from the sentence of death (mortality) that Adam’s sins had imposed on us all. Christians shall experience this freedom (immortality) at the resurrection. Christ also set us free from the bondage of sin and into the freedom we have in Christ, “Stand fast therefore in the *liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free*, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage” (Gal 5:1).

Therefore Christ, when he ascended to heaven, he freed us from the curse of the law which is death, and he gave us ministers to perfect the saints.

13. Believers never die? (John 11:25-26)

Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

“ And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?”

If the above translation is correct, it would contradict itself. Jesus said that believers who have died shall live. But in the next verse, Jesus is made to say that believers “shall never die.”

Let’s look at the more literal translation. The Concordant Literal New Testament reads: “ Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who is believing in me, even if he should be dying, shall be living. And everyone who is living and believing in me, should by no means be dying for the eon. Are you believing this?”

In other words Jesus said that even if his believers die before the Kingdom age (“eon”) comes, they shall be living (i.e. resurrected). And all believers who are alive when the eon comes “should be no means be dying for the eon.”

This verse does not prove we shall never die. It proves that whether we die before the Kingdom Age comes or live to see it come, all believers of every age shall live “for the eon.” At this point, we too ask the reader, “Believest thou this?”

Paul said the same thing in first Thessalonians chapter 4: “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the *dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain* shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (vv.16-17)

14. Absent from the body-Present with the Lord (2 Corinth 5:8)

“We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.”

This verse is I think the one verse that is most quoted to prove that when we die we go to Heaven. Yet at the same time it is one of the most misquoted and misunderstood verse in all the bible. In order to understand this verse properly we must see the thrust of Paul’s argument in the preceding verses. Let’s study this verse in context, using a literal translation:

“For we are aware that, if our terrestrial tabernacle house should be demolished, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eonian in the heavens.

“For in this also [terrestrial tabernacle] we are groaning, longing to be dressed in our habitation which is out of heaven, if so be that, being dressed also, we shall not be found naked.

“For we also, who are in the tabernacle, are groaning, being burdened, on which we are not wanting to be stripped, but to be dressed, that the mortal may be swallowed up by life.

“Now he who produces us for this same longing is God, Who is also giving us the earnest of the spirit.

“Being then courageous always, and aware that, being at home in the body, we are away from home from the Lord.

“(For by faith we are walking, not by perception),

“We are encouraged, and are delighting rather to be away from home out of the body AND to be at home with the Lord” (2 Corinth 5:1; 8 C.V.).

Verse one says there are two tabernacles, or bodies, one heavenly, and the other earthly (terrestrial). Verse 2 and 3 explain that at the present time we are burdened in our earthly bodies; but our hope is that some day we shall be “dressed” in the heavenly body, “that the mortal may be swallowed up by life” (v.3).

When will this mortal be swallowed up by life? The moment we die? No, for Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 15:52-54 that our mortality will not be changed to immortality until the “last trump,” *Paul makes it Plain that he looked forward to the resurrection not to the day of his death:*

“...we are NOT wanting to be stripped [die], but to be dressed [resurrected]...” (v.3).

Did Paul then turn around and say in verse 8 that when he died, he would be “present with the Lord?” Of course Not! He simply repeated what he said that (1) that this mortal body was burdensome, and (2) that he would rather be dressed in the resurrected body AND “to be at home [in his new body] with the Lord.”

15. Paul Dilemma (Philippians 1:22-23).

Many people who believe in the immortality of the soul say that this is one of the strongest scriptures to prove their point.

People’s failure to recognize what Paul is saying is due to the belief that they have had all their lives of the immortality of the soul. They try and read that belief into the text itself. Paul statement here “My desire to depart and be with Christ” is a “relational and NOT and anthropological statement...it is a *statement of the relation that exists and continues between the believer and Christ through death, not a statement of the ‘state’ of the body and soul between death and the resurrection*” (Biacchicchi, p.178, emphasis added).

Also, if the reader would read verses 12-21 it will be clear what Paul is saying, that his death would be gain for Christ. Gain for the spreading of the Gospel. “to die is gain” (v.21). **Gain for Paul or Christ? Let see!**

Paul had been cast into prison, but instead of the other Christians hiding themselves, they were “confident by my bonds” and openly preaching the Gospel. Thus Paul says: “But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the *furtherance of the Gospel*” (v.12).

After spending much time rejoicing over “the furtherance of the Gospel,” Paul finally begins to discuss he possibility of his being executed for his faith:

“...So now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death

“For [because] to me to live is Christ, and die is gain” (vv.20-21)

We see that Paul is telling us that the *Gospel of Christ would be spread further either by his death and by his life*, and Christ would be magnified either way. As Tertullian testified in the second century A.D., “The blood of Christians is seed...” So was Paul to gain? **NO!** Christ was to gain by the furtherance of the gospel by either Paul’s martyrdom, or Paul life’s mission of preaching the Gospel to the world.

Now verse 23 we can understand now that we know what Paul is speaking of. “I am in a strait betwixt two,” or “I am being pressed out of the two.” Here is Paul’s dilemma which was for *Christ’s gain not his*, to be executed so Christ would be magnified, or if he was acquitted, Christ would be magnified as well. Paul could not decide which was best for Christ, so he decided not to state any preference to the Philippians: “...yet what I shall choose I wot not [literally “I am not making known”] (v.22). Paul could not choose either of them, so Paul introduces a third choice which was his real desire: “having a desire to depart and to be with Christ; which is far better” (v.23). His third choice was far better. But does this verse indicate heaven? No it does not. “To depart” in the Greek is “*anulusai*.” This word is found only one other time in the scriptures, where it is rendered “return.”

“And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return [*anulusai*] from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately “ (Luke 12:36). Notice Jesus uses this parable comparing it to HIS second coming. The “return” of their “Lord.”

The Companion Bible tell us this word is also used in the Apocrypha as well, where it was frequently translated “return.” It also states that “to depart” in Philippians should be translated “for the return.” So here we have Paul’s real desire “the return” of Jesus Christ and “to be” with him, “which is far better.” Paul third choice was to be in the resurrection and to be with Jesus, as he says in 1 Thessalonians 4:17: “so shall we ever be with the Lord.” And when you read verses 16-17 of that chapter Paul is speaking of the resurrection of the dead!

16. Spirit, Soul, and Body 1 Thessalonians 5:23

The key to understanding Paul’s reference to the “spirit, soul and body” in Thessalonians is the fact that the Apostle is addressing believing Christians who, while they are still in the flesh (body), possess two natures; the original Adamic nature received at birth (the soul) and the new spiritual nature created within them by the enabling power of (the Spirit). The Adamic nature, is called “soul” and denotes various aspects of the physical life associated with the soul in the Bible. *Naphesh* and *psyche* are basically the same meanings in the old and new testaments. The spiritual nature is called “spirit” because it is God’s spirit that renews and transforms human nature when receive after baptism with the laying on of hands.. The body is the outward visible part of the person.

Paul’s prayer for the Thessalonians to keep the “soul-psyche” sound and blameless for Christ’s coming means that they were to live not only for the physical life (Matt 6:25; Acts 20:24), which is threatened by death, but also for the higher eternal life that transcends death. Similarly, Paul’s prayer for the Thessalonians to keep their body sound and blameless means that they would not “gratify the desires of the flesh” (Gal 5:16). or produce the “works of the flesh” such as fornication, impurity and licentiousness (Gal 5:19)

Finally, Paul's prayer for the Thessalonians to keep their spirit sound and blameless means that they should be led by the Spirit (Gal 5:18) and produce the "fruits of the spirit" such as love, joy and peace etc.. (Gal 5:22). Thus Paul's prayer for the Thessalonians to keep Soul, Spirit, and Body blameless is not and intended to list the structural components of the human nature, but to emphasize the total lifestyle of those who await Christ's coming. The distinction between the three is ethical not and not ontological.

17. Soul's "under the Altar" (Rev 6:9:11)

"And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held:

"And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"

"And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled."

Those who believe in the immortality of the Soul teach that this passage proves that the martyrs are in heaven. However they do try to attempt to explain why these souls are "under the Altar." rather than in heaven. Neither do they try to explain why these souls were told to "rest yet for a little season."

This opening of the 5th seal is a part of a vision that John saw 2000 years ago. Like the appearance of Moses and Elijah on the mount with Jesus, this scene only occurred in a vision.

The symbolic language used here is very similar to that used in the case of Abel. When Cain slew his brother, God did NOT say to Cain: "Your brother Abel's soul came up to me in heaven and told me you killed him." No, God said: "the voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground" (Gen 4:10). This is a metaphor meaning vengeance for the crime committed. The martyr asking God to avenge him. The martyrs in Rev 6 say the same thing: "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (v.10).

Yet why does Genesis 4:10 say the blood cries from the Ground, yet in Revelation its says from the "altar"? Is there a connection between the ground and the altar? We believe there is.

A martyr is one who sacrificed his life for his faith Jesus Christ. In fact, any true Christian presents his life as a "living sacrifice" (Rom 12:1), and who is willing to sacrifice his life for his faith, "they loved not their lives unto the death" (Rev 12:11).

In the law of sacrifices the Levites were commanded to offer bullocks upon the altar and "pour all the blood of the bullock at the bottom of the altar of the burnt offering," (Lev 4:7).

The blood of the sacrifices were always to be poured under the altar upon the ground. When the people killed animals for food, they too were commanded to pour the blood upon the ground and cover it with dust. Why? Leviticus 17 says that it was because the soul of the animal is in the blood; and the soul of the animal was to be put in the ground as an atonement for our souls: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul...For it is the life [Nephesh "Soul"]

of all flesh; the blood of it is for the life thereof: therefore I said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh: for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof: ...(Lev 17:11,14).

When Jesus Christ the lamb of God was sacrificed for our sins, He “poured out his soul [blood] unto death” (Isaiah 53:12). Christ’s soul was made an offering for sin. His soul died, for that was the penalty for sin as it is written: “...the soul that sinneth it shall die” (Ezekiel 18:4)

Thus we see the blood is the soul of the flesh, and the blood must be poured upon the ground in atonement for our souls. The fact that the soul of the animal was killed and placed on the ground to atone for man’s sin proves that man’s soul dies and goes into the ground as well.

We conclude that John did not see saints alive in heaven, but rather a VISION of the many saints who “were slain for the word of God” and who were “under the altar” (in the ground), where they shall “rest” (sleep) until all pre-resurrection events are fulfilled, where their “fellow servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.” (Rev 6:11). More sacrifices of saints will be added under the altar and poured on the ground, Then their “rest” shall end in the resurrection.

18. Twenty-Four Elders in Heaven Rev 4:8-11

“And the four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: ‘Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!’ Whenever the living creatures give glory and honour and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: ‘You are Worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created’ “ (Revelation 4:8-11).

The Bible shows us that many thousands of angels appear before God’s throne, and they speak with loud voices. “Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice:

‘Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honour and glory and blessing!’ “ (Revelation 5:11-12).

We have seen that the Scriptures show no human has ever entered heaven. The voices referred to in Revelation 19, then, are those of angelic beings who surround God’s great throne.

19. Rich Man and Lazarus Luke 16:19-31 see below and read our booklet for a full study

20. Matthew 10:28 Body and Soul

“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”

Jesus clearly teaches in this text that the soul is not naturally immortal. It can and will be destroyed in hell. But what does He mean about killing the body, but not the soul? Is it possible for the soul to exist apart from the body? Some say it is, but the Bible indicates otherwise.

The Greek word “psuche” has been translated “soul” in this text, but in forty other texts it has been translated “life.” For example, Jesus said, “Whosoever shall lose his life (psuche) for my sake shall find it.” Matthew 16:25. Obviously “psuche” could not mean soul in this instance, or people could be said to lose their soul for Christ’s sake. It is properly translated “life. “

But what of Matthew 10:28? Put in the word “life” instead of “soul” and the text makes perfect sense in its consistency with the rest of the Bible. The contrast is between one who can take the physical life, and He who can take away eternal life. Here is proof in the words of Jesus: “And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell.” Luke 12:4, 5.

In other words, the word “soul” here means not only life, but eternal life. Notice that Luke says everything just like Matthew except that he does not say “kills the soul.” Instead he says “cast into hell.” They mean the same thing. Men can only kill the body and take away the physical life. God will cast into hell and take away eternal life. Not only will their bodies be destroyed in that fire, but their lives will be snuffed out for all eternity.

Biacchiocci comes to the same conclusion: “To kill the body means to *take the present life on earth*. But this does not kill the soul, that is the eternal life received by those who have accepted Christ’s provision of salvation...all the dead will be resurrected on the last day, as they lie in their graves their soul, that is their life that they have lived for or against Jesus Christ, is still awaiting its final destiny; eternal salvation for believers and eternal destruction for unbelievers. *The latter is the destruction of body and soul in hell that Jesus warned about*” (ibid, p.88, emphasis added).

21. John 14:2 “In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.”

In John 14:13, Jesus says, “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.”

Since Jesus ascended to heaven after His resurrection, and since God the Father dwells in heaven, we might safely assume that the “Father’s house” of which Jesus spoke is in heaven. Moreover, since Jesus said, “I go to prepare a place for you,” we might safely assume that the “place” He is preparing is in the Father’s house in heaven.

But notice that Jesus did not say that His followers would go to heaven and take up residence in the new mansions He had prepared for them. On the contrary, He said, “I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.” Jesus will receive His saints when He comes again not before! He will establish His kingdom right here on this earth, and the saints will reign with Him (Revelation 2:26,27; 3:21; 5:10).

The term translated “mansions” is better rendered “rooms,” “abodes,” or “chambers.” The Father’s house, Jesus says, has many rooms, and He is now preparing a place for His disciples, but they will not take up residence in their new place until the Father’s house the Father’s dwelling place comes to this earth.

Jesus promises, “He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God” (Revelation 3:12).

The apostle John saw the New Jerusalem in a vision. He wrote, “Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God’” (Revelation 21:2,3).

Notice that the dwelling place of God the “Father’s house” will be located here on this earth.

22. Philippians 3:20-21,

“For our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body.”

This verse doesn’t say we go to Heaven to join our eternal body. The truth is, the Savior will return at the resurrection with our glorious citizenship (reward, treasure, building of God, inheritance).

23. “Gave up the Ghost”

In Genesis 25:8 we read of the death of Abraham and it says: “Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age...” In nine other instances in the Old Testament in the (KJV) similarly speaks of a dying person. In all those ten cases a single Hebrew verb (*gawa*) is translated into the four-word phrase “gave up the ghost,” or “yielded up the ghost.” In other instances in that same version *gawa* is translated to “be dead” once “die” 11 times, “perish” twice, and (as a participle) “ready to die” once.

In Hebrew “*gawa*” means “to gasp out,” “to breath out.” Hence it is no surprise to find the Revised Standard Version saying “Abraham breathed his last and died.” So also the New American Standard Bible, The New American Bible, and the Jerusalem Bible. The English Translation long published by the Jewish publications Society of America simply says that “Abraham expired.”

In the New Testament of the King James it is stated concerning four persons that each of them “gave up the ghost.” when they died. In two such accounts the Greek noun *pneuma* is rendered “ghost.” But in these instances (Matthew 27:50; John 19:30) the Greek term is used “as the equivalent of the Hebrew word *ruach*, and means the ‘spirit’ or the *breath of life from God...*” (Is Your Soul Immortal, Robert Leo Odom, p.34, emphasis added).

Mark 15:37, 39 and Luke 23:46 the Greek verb *ekpneo* is rendered as “gave up the ghost.” The prefix *ek* (meaning “out”) and the verb *pneo* (“to blow, to breath”) are combined as *ekpneo*, which means “to breath out,” “to exhale,” or “to gasp.” Several modern versions which are not paraphrasing rendered the verb as “breathed his last.” Some simply say he “died.”

In mentioning the deaths of Ananias, Sapphira, and King Herod, the KJV states that they “gave up the ghost,” or “yielded up the ghost.” Acts 5:5, 10, 12:23. The Greek verb used here is *eksucho*, which is correctly rendered as “died” in several modern translations of the New Testament. No “ghost” is mentioned here.

24. Matthew 27:52-53

“And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.”

Some use this as a proof text to show that when we die we go to heaven. But nowhere does it say that these people went to heaven with Jesus. These people were resurrected in the same manner that *Lazarus was resurrected*, back to physical human life, *not* eternal life. These people eventually died again and are in the graves awaiting eternal life in the resurrection. And, when these people came back to life, why is it, again, they are silent about heaven? Why don't these people describe heaven and God, what he looks like etc...?

Other Objections

1. What do scholars say? Some people argue that scholars do not agree with these conclusions. Yet, this is not true. Clarke H. Pinnock a scholar at McMaster Divinity College in Hamilton, Ontario Canada writes: “A large number of scholars agree with the author [Samuele Biacchicchio's conclusions on the state of the dead] as regards [to] human nature *but no one has so courageously drawn out many of the necessary implications*. This book is much needed in order to combat the persistent but mistaken opinion among Christians that the soul is an immortal substance, a belief which is both unbiblical and harmful” (Immortality or Resurrection p.13 Forward by Pinnock, emphasis added).

2. Other people believe that the Jews in the time of Jesus believe in a immortal soul. “If the Jews believed it then it must have come from the Bible” some argue. But the Jewish Encyclopaedia makes its plain that this is not the case. *See below for the Origins of the Immortality of the Soul*

3. Some people argue that the Essenes believed in the immortality of the soul, therefore raise the argument that the Jews believed in an afterlife immediately at death. But again Josephus the great Jewish historian of the first century writes that the Essenes got this belief from the Greeks. Josephus writes that these came from Greek “fables” and is built “on the supposition that souls are immortal” and that “bad men...suffer immortal punishment after death.” He calls these beliefs “an unavoidable bait for such as have once has a taste for their [Greek] philosophy” (*Josephus War of the Jews 2, 9, 11 cited from Josephus Complete Works Trans. William Whiston p.478*).

4. What About Reported Life-after-death Experiences?

Occasionally the news media report the story of someone who supposedly came back to life after he or she had died and returned to consciousness to relate the incident. Sometimes these happenings seem truly remarkable and appear to contradict the many biblical passages describing death. How can that be?

The basic premise of these accounts is that the people describing their experiences actually died. True, many of them were declared “clinically dead.” However, as with life itself there is much that medical science has not grasped about the nature of death. Doctors and scientists do not agree on exactly what constitutes “death.” Some people, for example, may be brain-dead or comatose while the rest of their body functions for years. Others whose hearts or lungs have stopped have been successfully resuscitated with no permanent ill effects.

In the Bible death is described as a state of total unconsciousness devoid of awareness, knowledge or perception (Psalm 6:5; Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10).

If we accept the Bible's description of death, we realize that those who returned to consciousness or were revived and later related their experiences were not really dead but in some unconscious state. Some vital organs, such as the heart, may have temporarily ceased functioning, but not all brain activity had stopped.

Researchers have found that the human nervous system and brain operate largely through electrical impulses. The brain requires blood and oxygen to properly function, and when breathing or blood circulation is impaired the brain begins to malfunction. If these functions are interrupted long enough, the brain eventually ceases all activity.

Some researchers conclude that the unusual sensations, including lights and sounds, reported by those revived after being clinically dead can be attributed to malfunctions of the nervous system and brain brought about by the shock to the body brought on by nearly dying.

Part Two

Origins of The Immortal Soul

FEW BELIEFS are more widely held than that of the "immortal soul." Virtually everyone is familiar with the concept. The average religious person, if asked, would state it something like this:

A human person is both *body* and *soul*. The body is the physical flesh-and-blood "shell" temporarily housing the soul. The soul is the nonmaterial aspect, made of spirit. At death the soul leaves the body, and lives on consciously forever in heaven or hell. (Some hold that liberated souls are reborn in new bodies in a series of "reincarnations" or "transmigrations.")

Some form of this concept is found among virtually all peoples and religions in the world today. The average religious person generally takes the idea for granted.

Science, which deals with the material universe and physical data, cannot verify or deny the existence of any such soul.

How, then, can one *know* whether or not man really has an "immortal soul"?

Few have stopped to ask *where* the concept came from in the first place. Many simply *assume* it has its origin in the Bible.

So prepare yourself for what could be one of the big surprises of your life!

The idea of an "immortal soul" long predates the founding of today's major religions. The ancient Greek historian Herodotus (5th century B.C.) tells us in his *History* that the ancient Egyptians were the first to teach that the soul of man is separable from the body, and immortal. This Egyptian idea was centuries before Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam came onto the scene.

Nowhere in the ancient world was the afterlife of more concern than in Egypt. The countless tombs unearthed by archaeologists along the Nile provide eloquent testimony to the Egyptian belief that man possessed a spiritual aspect extending beyond his physical life.

To the east, the ancient Babylonians also held a belief in a future life of the soul in a “lower world.” But Babylonian beliefs were nowhere so elaborate as the Egyptian.

A person, the Egyptians believed, consisted of a physical body and not one but *two* souls that lived on after his death:

a *ka* soul and a *ba* soul.

The *ka* was said to be a spirit replica of a man, containing the “vital force” given to him at birth. At death, the *ka* was believed to take up residence in a statue or picture of the deceased. The statue or picture was placed in the tomb for that very purpose. As the tomb was to be the eternal home of the *ka*, it was provided with everything the *ka* would need for a happy afterlife—food, furniture, games, reading material, grooming aids and the like.

The other soul, the *ba*, was held to be that part of man that enjoyed an eternal existence in heaven. It was believed to fly from the body with the last breath. The *ba* was often depicted on tomb paintings as a human-headed hawk hovering over the deceased’s body. The ancient Egyptians believed the *ba* occasionally came back to “visit” the body in the tomb and to partake of the food and drink offerings there.

The famous *Book of The Dead*—a collection of ancient Egyptian funerary and ritual texts—lays out in great detail the many Egyptian beliefs about the afterlife. In one version of the work, dating from the 15th century B.C., the *ba* of a deceased person is pictured as asking one of the Egyptian gods, “How long have I to live?” To which the god replied: “Thou shalt exist for millions of millions of years, a period of millions of years.” What better depiction of the concept of immortality?

Passed on to Greeks

The idea of the soul’s immortality did not cease with ancient Egyptian civilization. Notice again the testimony of the historian Herodotus:

“The Egyptians were the first that asserted that the soul of man is immortal...This opinion *some among the Greeks* have at different periods of time adopted as their own” (from *Euterpe*, the second book of Herodotus’ *History*).

The pagan Greeks got the concept of an immortal soul from the Egyptians! The foremost advocate among the ancient Greeks of the idea of an “immortal soul” was the Athenian philosopher Plato (428-348 B.C.), the pupil of Socrates. Plato was the founder of the Academy, an institute for philosophical and scientific research just outside of Athens.

The pre-Socratic Greek philosophers had no real conception of any nonmaterial element in man. The philosophers Socrates and Pythagoras were among the first of the Greeks to adopt the Egyptian view. They subsequently had a great influence on the thought of Plato. It was Plato who popularized the immortal soul concept throughout the Greek world.

In the *Phaedo*—one of Plato’s most famous works—Plato recounts Socrates’ final conversation with his friends on the last day of Socrates’ life. Socrates declared to them:

“Be of good cheer, and do not lament my passing ...When you lay me down in my grave, say that you are burying my body only, and not my soul.”

Socrates' statement is little different from the teaching of most churches today!

Notice also the following assertion from Plato, again taken from the *Phaedo*:

“The soul whose inseparable attitude is life will never admit of life's opposite, death. Thus the soul is shown to be immortal, and since immortal, indestructible...Do we believe there is such a thing as death? To be sure. And is this anything but the separation of the soul and body? And being dead is the attainment of this separation, when the soul exists in herself and separate from the body, and the body is parted from the soul. That is death.... Death is merely the separation of the soul and body.”

In Book X of *The Republic*—another of Plato's major works—he again wrote: “The soul of man is immortal and imperishable.”

Statements by such ancient Greek and Roman writers as Polybius, Cicero, Seneca, Strabo—and even Plato himself—have led some modern historians to question whether Plato *really* personally believed the immortal soul doctrine. They suggest that he may have simply popularized what he knew to be a fiction as a means of keeping the citizenry in line through the fear of mysterious “unseen things” beyond this life.

The immortal soul concept, in other words, was a necessary companion doctrine to the doctrine of the terrible torments of parts of Hades or hell. Such fearsome teachings, some philosophers thought, were necessary to scare the masses into being good citizens.

Regardless of his motives and personal beliefs, Plato's teachings did have a wide impact. They spread throughout the known world and were accepted as truth by millions.

Plato and the Jews

The Jewish communities of antiquity were deeply influenced by Greek philosophical ideas. Many will suppose that the Platonic view of the soul imprisoned in the flesh would have been nothing new to the Jews. But notice the testimony of Jewish scholars themselves:

“The belief that the soul continues its existence after the dissolution of the body is...nowhere expressly taught in Holy Scripture...The belief in the immortality of the soul came to the Jews from contact with Greek thought and chiefly through the philosophy of Plato its principle exponent, who was led to it through Orphic and Eleusinian mysteries in which Babylonian and Egyptian views were strangely blended” (The *Jewish Encyclopedia*, article, “Immortality of the Soul”).

The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia comments on ancient Israelites view of the soul: “...We are influenced always more or less by the Greek, Platonic idea, that the body dies, yet the soul is immortal. Such an idea is utterly contrary to the Israelite consciousness, and it is nowhere found in the [Old Testament]” (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1956, Vol. II, Death, p. 812).

Many of you will undoubtedly be surprised to discover that the idea of the immortality of the soul was not derived by the Jews from the Old Testament scriptures, but rather taken *from Plato*.

Another Surprise!

But what of the professing Christian world? Certainly here we should find the doctrine of an immortal soul independent of any Greek influence.

Now consider this fact:

Many of the early theologians and scholars of the professing Christian religion—including such men as Origen, Tertullian and Augustine—were closely associated with Platonism.

Tertullian (A.D. 155-220), for example, wrote: “For some things are known even by nature: the immortality of the soul, the instance, is held by many ... I may use, therefore, *the opinion of Plato*, when he declares: ‘Every soul is immortal’” (*The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. III).

Notice, it is the opinion of Plato that is cited!

Augustine of Hippo (A.D. 354-430)—held to be the greatest thinker of Christian antiquity—also taught the immaterial and spiritual nature of the human soul. But notice the source of his teachings. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* states:

“He [Augustine] fused the religion of the New Testament with the Platonic tradition of Greek philosophy.”

The *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* notes how Origen, an early and influential church theologian, was influenced by Greek thinkers: “Speculation about the soul in the subapostolic church was heavily influenced by Greek philosophy. This is seen in Origen’s acceptance of Plato’s doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul as pure mind (nous) originally, which, by reason of its fall from God, cooled down to soul (psyche) when it lost its participation in the divine fire by looking earthward” (Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1992, p. 1037, Soul).

Why should those early professing Christian scholars have resorted to the opinions of a pagan Greek philosopher? Could it be that the immortal soul doctrine is not clearly supported in Christian Scripture?

Notice the much later view of Martin Luther, leader of the Protestant Reformation in Germany. More than a thousand years later, in 1522, he wrote:

“It is probable, in my opinion, that, with very few exceptions, indeed, the dead sleep in utter insensibility till the day of judgment *On what authority* can it be said that the souls of the dead may not sleep ... in the same way that the living pass in profound slumber the interval between their downlying at night and their uprising in the morning?”

Luther himself encountered difficulty in finding support for the immortal soul doctrine in the pages of Scripture.

Notice that he asked, “On what authority...?”

But the deep-seated teachings of centuries were not to be easily dislodged, even by Protestant reformers. Theologians and churchgoers alike persisted, for the most part, in their unquestioning embrace of the ideas passed down from the ancient pagan philosophers. As the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* summarizes:

“Traditional Western philosophy, starting with the ancient Greeks...shaped the basic Western concepts of the soul.” (*From the booklet What is Man? And what Happens after Death by UCG*)

Part Three

Is there Really a Hell Fire?

The Biblical View of ‘Hell’

Is eternity in an ever-burning inferno the fate of the wicked? Many assume that it is, but is that what the Bible says? To answer that question, we need to understand the four Hebrew and Greek words translated “hell” in most versions of the Bible.

Sheol is the Hebrew word translated “hell” throughout the Old Testament. It refers to “the state and abode of the dead; hence the grave in which the body rests . . .” (William Wilson, *Wilson’s Old Testament Word Studies*, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, Massachusetts, “Hell,” p. 215). The *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words* explains, “Thus there are no references to eternal destiny but simply to the grave as the resting place of the bodies of all people . . .” (Lawrence O. Richards, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1985, p. 336).

Reflecting its true meaning, many more-recent Bible versions translate this word as simply “the grave” or leave it untranslated as Sheol.

Among those who knew that they were going to sheol-the grave, not an ever-burning inferno-were such men of faith as Jacob (Genesis 37:35), Job (Job 14:13), David (Psalm 88:3) and Hezekiah (Isaiah 38:10). Clearly, sheol does not refer to a place of eternal torment.

Greek words translated ‘hell’

The counterpart of sheol in the Greek language is hades, which also refers to the grave. In the four New Testament verses that quote Old Testament passages containing sheol, hades is used for sheol (Matthew 11:23; Luke 10:15; Acts 2:27, 31). As with sheol, hades is rendered as “the grave” or “death” or left untranslated as Hades in recent Bible versions.

Hades likewise does not refer to a place of fiery torment. Indeed, the apostle Peter refers to Christ Himself as having been in “Hades” (Acts 2:27, 31) or “hell” (King James Version), referring to the time He was entombed before His resurrection. Both words simply refer to the grave.

A second Greek word, tartaroo, is also translated “hell” in the New Testament. This word is used only once in the Bible (2 Peter 2:4), where it refers to the place where the fallen angels, or demons, are restrained awaiting their judgment. The *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words* explains that tartaroo means “to confine in Tartaros” and that “Tartaros was the Greek name for the mythological abyss in which rebellious gods were confined” (p. 337). Peter used this reference to contemporary mythology to show that the sinning angels were “delivered . . . into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment.” These fallen angels are in a condition or place of restraint awaiting their ultimate judgment for their rebellion against God and destructive influence on humanity.

Tartaros applies only to demons. Nowhere does tartaroo refer to a fiery hell in which people are punished after death.

It is only with the remaining word translated “hell”-the Greek word gehenna-that we see some

elements people commonly associate with the traditional view of hell. However, this word also has significant differences from the popular concept of hell.

Gehenna “is derived from the Hebr[ew] expression, ga-Hinnom, Valley of Hinnom . . . Religiously it was a place of idolatrous and human sacrifices . . . In order to put an end to these abominations, Josiah polluted it with human bones and other corruptions (2 Kgs. 23:10, 13, 14)” (Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary New Testament*, AMG Publishers, Chattanooga, 1992, p. 360).

Thanks in large part to its evil reputation, this valley bordering Jerusalem came to be used as the city garbage dump. Trash was burned there, along with the bodies of dead animals and criminals. Fires day and night consumed the refuse.

Inferno to destroy the wicked

Gehenna is used 12 times in the Bible, with 11 of those recording Christ’s words. When Jesus spoke of gehenna, His listeners knew that this “hell” was a consuming fire in which garbage and the bodies of the wicked were destroyed. He bluntly warned that this destroying fire would be the fate of the incorrigibly wicked (Matthew 5:22, 29-30; 23:15, 33; Luke 12:5).

But when would this take place? Many of those who opposed Christ were among the religious and civil leadership of His day; they weren’t treated as criminals, with their bodies burned in the city dump. Christ knew that their ultimate judgment, along with that of the overwhelming majority of humanity throughout history, would be far in the future (*as made clear throughout this booklet*).

After being resurrected, those who are shown God’s way but still refuse to repent will face gehenna fire, an all-consuming inferno that will completely destroy them and all memory of them, with no hope of further resurrection (Matthew 10:28).

The book of Revelation calls this inferno “the lake of fire” (Revelation 19:20; 20:10, 14-15). In the time frame revealed in the Bible, this follows 1,000 years of Christ’s reign on earth (Revelation 20:1-6) and a resurrection to physical life of all those who have never known God and His ways (verses 5, 11-13). Those resurrected at that time will have the opportunity to learn God’s ways, repent and receive His gift of eternal life.

Some, however, will refuse that gift. The Bible records their tragic epitaph: “And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire” (verse 15).

Those who willingly choose to reject God’s way will not be allowed to continue living in the misery their choice will bring. They will die, not suffer forever. They will be consumed in this fire, leaving nothing but ashes (Malachi 4:1-3). An examination of all the words translated “hell” shows that the traditional view of an ever-burning place of torment where the wicked are punished for eternity cannot be found in the Bible.

Will the Wicked Be Tormented Forever?

“He shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever; and they have no rest day or

night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receives the mark of his name” (Revelation 14:10-11).

At first glance, this may seem to confirm the traditional idea of a seething, sulfurous hellfire, mercilessly and eternally tormenting helpless immortal souls. But, if we don’t already hold to that mental picture of hell, we can see that this passage describes a quite different circumstance.

First, notice that the smoke of their torment ascends forever; it does not say that their torment continues forever. Smoke is what remains of the burned bodies of those who worshiped “the beast and his image” (verse 9), the political and false religious system Jesus will destroy and replace at His return.

In the book of Isaiah we find the fate of Edom in the language strikingly similar to that of Revelation 14:10: “And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch.

“It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever” (Isaiah 34:9-10). As in Revelation 14, we see the unquenchable fire, the sulphur (brimstone), and the smoke that goes up forever, night and day. Does this mean Edom was to burn forever? The answer is in the next verse: “from generation to generation it shall *lie waste*; none shall pass through it for ever and ever” (v.10). “..it is evident that the unquenchable fire and the ever ascending smoke are *metaphoric symbols of complete destruction, extermination and annihilation*” (Biacchiocchi, p212, emphasis added). If this is the meaning of the imagery in the Old Testament, then we have reason to believe that the text under consideration has the same meaning.

This conclusion is supported by John’s vision of Babylon the Great in Revelation 18. The city “shall be burned with fire” (v.8), “And her smoke rose up for ever and ever” (Rev 19:3). Does this mean Babylon will burn for eternity? Obviously not, because the merchants cry: “Alas, alas that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come...for in one hour is she made desolate...and shall be found no more at all” (Rev 18:10, 19, 21). It is obvious that the smoke of her torment that goes “up for ever and ever” represents complete destruction because the city “shall be found no more” (Rev 18:21).

Other passages clarify that the wicked will be destroyed and become ashes under the feet of the righteous: “‘For behold, the day is coming, burning like an oven, and all the proud, yes, all who do wickedly will be stubble. And the day which is coming shall burn them up,’ says the LORD of hosts, ‘that will leave them neither root nor branch. But to you who fear My name the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings; and you shall go out and grow fat like stall-fed calves. You shall trample the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day that I do this,’ says the LORD of Hosts” (Malachi 4:1-3).

The reference in Revelation 14:11 to these who are wicked receiving “no rest day or night” is speaking of those who continue to worship the beast and his image. Once they are thrown into this hellfire, they will be burned up and will no longer be alive to be tormented.

The phrase “they have no rest day and night” is interpreted by traditionalists as eternal torment in hell. The phrase however, “denotes the continuity and NOT the eternal duration of an action.” (ibid, p.213, emphasis added) John uses the same phrase for the beasts praising God day and night

(Rev 4:8), the martyrs serving God (Rev 7:15). Satan accusing the brethren (Rev 12:10), and the beast and false prophet in the lake of fire (Rev 20:10). In each case the “*thought is the same: the action continues while it lasts*” (ibid, p.213,emphasis added). Harold Guillebaud correctly explains that the phrase “certainly says that there will be no break or intermission in the suffering of the followers of the Beast, *while it continues*; but in itself it does not say that it will continue forever” (The Righteous Judge. A Study of the Biblical Doctrine of Everlasting Punishment, p.24, emphasis added).

Notice David’s comment that the wicked will not be tormented forever, but will go up “into smoke” and perish: “But the wicked shall perish; and the enemies of the LORD, like the splendor of the meadows, shall vanish. Into smoke they [the wicked] shall vanish away” (Psalm 37:20).

The unrepentant wicked, who knowingly refuse to accept the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and refuse to submit to, obey and worship God the Father, will be destroyed by fire. The smoke of their torment will rise “ forever,” meaning that nothing will stop or prevent it. The Greek word translated “forever” does not always mean eternity or infinity. It can simply refer to something that will not be stopped, that will continue as long as conditions permit.

Are the Wicked Punished in an Ever-burning Hell?

(Immortal Worms In Hell?)

“It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire-where ‘their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched’ “ (Mark 9:47-48).

Did Jesus here warn of an eternal punishment in hellfire?

The words in the phrase hell fire, above, are translated from the Greek word gehenna. Jesus here referred to the valley of Hinnom, just outside of Jerusalem. In His day this area was a garbage dump in which fires burned constantly, fueled by trash and the dead bodies of animals and criminals.

Jesus used this desolate and miserable place as symbolic of the fate of unrepentant sinners. Notice that Jesus says the worm does not die, not that the people punished in hellfire do not die. The punishment is eternal, meaning that *it is permanent and complete*. But this does not mean that the incorrigible are kept alive and tortured by a vengeful God.

Burned remains of the bodies in the original gehenna, the Valley of Hinnom, decomposed and were infested with maggots. The fire was not extinguished-it burned as long as there was trash to keep it burning-and the maggots (the “worms” of Mark 9:48) were not destroyed. *Maggots are the wormlike larvae of flies. Flies swarm over the decaying refuse and keep it continuously infested with maggots.* Then, instead of dying, those creatures turn into more flies in a continuing cycle.

The bodies of animals and people thrown into gehenna, however, either decayed or burned up and, of course, were eventually completely consumed. Similarly, unrepentant sinners will not be tormented forever; they will be completely and eternally destroyed in the lake of fire, referred to in Revelation 20:14.

Are Some Tortured Forever in a Lake of Fire?

“The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever” (Revelation 20:10).

Does this verse say that the beast and false prophet will be tormented for eternity?

The beast and false prophet are human beings. While still alive, they will be cast into the lake of fire. “Then the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshipped his image. These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone” (Revelation 19:20).

We see from Revelation 14:10-11 and Mark 9:47-48 that any human being thrown into the lake of fire will be destroyed. He will perish. His punishment will be eternal. But he will not be tormented for eternity.

Notice in the King James and the New King James translations of Revelation 20:10 that the word “are” is in italics. This indicates that the word was not in the original manuscripts from which the translation was made; it was added by the translators to make the verse more readable. The word “were” would be more appropriate. The verse would then properly indicate that the devil is to be cast into the lake of fire that had already consumed and destroyed the beast and false prophet. So it should read “where the beast and the false prophet *were cast.*”

“Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth”?

“Four times in the Gospel of Matthew we are told that on the day of Judgement, ‘there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth’ (Matthew 8:12; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30). Believer’s in literal eternal hell fire generally assume that the ‘weeping and gnashing of teeth’ describes the conscious agony experienced by the lost for all eternity. A look at the context of each text suggests, however, that the ‘weeping and grinding of teeth’ occurs in the context of separation or expulsion that occurs at the final judgement.

“Both phrases derive most likely from the ‘weeping and gnashing of teeth’ associated with the day of the Lord in the Old Testament. For example, Zephaniah describes the Day of the Lord in the following words: ‘The Day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord: the mighty man *shall cry there bitterly*’ (Zeph 1:14). In a similar fashion, the Psalmist says: ‘The wicked shall see it, and be greived; he *shall gnash with his teeth*, and melt away; the desire of the wicked shall perish’ (Psalm 112:10). Here the Psalmist clearly indicates that the gnashing of teeth is the outcome of the judgment of the wicked which ultimately results in their destruction.

“Edward Fudge perceptively observes that ‘the expression’ ‘weeping and grinding of teeth’ seems to indicate two separate activities. The first reflects the *terror of the doomed as they begin truly to realize that God has thrown them out as worthless and as they anticipate the execution of his sentence.* The second seems to express the *bitter rage and acrimony they feel toward God, who sentenced them, and toward the redeemed, who will forever be blessed*” (Immortality or Resurrection, p.209, emphasis his and mine).

Does the Parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man Prove Some Will Suffer in Hell?

“There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

“So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. Then he cried and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.’

“But Abraham said, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.’

“Then he said, ‘I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father’s house, for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.’

“Abraham said to him, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.’

“And he said, ‘No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’

“But he said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead’ “ (Luke 16:19-31).

Allegorical account

A consideration of the account of Lazarus and the rich man in view of other scriptures on the subject of death and the resurrection makes it clear that this is an allegory used to teach important spiritual lessons. It is not intended to be understood literally, nor is this a description of the actual events that take place after death or at the resurrection.

The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia discusses the contemporary background of the allegory. “This parable follows a story common in Egyptian and Jewish thought, in which the wicked rich and the pious poor have their positions reversed in the afterlife. It is told from the point of view of the rich man . . . who speaks with Abraham from his place of torment . . .

“Although this parable does not intend to give a topographical study of the abode of the dead, it is built upon and thus confirms common Jewish thought . . . In the Jewish conception of Hades . . . the good and the wicked could see each other but were separated by a great impassable chasm. Across this chasm the rich man called to Abraham, begging that Lazarus be sent to comfort him. When he was assured of the impossibility of this, he begged that Lazarus be sent back to warn his brothers of their possible fate. Abraham said that if they would not believe Moses, they would not believe one

returned from the dead.

“The parable . . . warns the rich that their possessions do not guarantee their future state. The parable was apparently directed toward Sadducean satisfaction with this life, based upon the belief that there would be no life beyond. Thus, Abraham said that even one from the dead would not convince the living to repent” (Edermans, Grand Rapids, 1986, Vol. III, p. 94).

Spiritual lesson

Jesus took a familiar story of the day and pointed out a spiritual lesson to those of His day who identified with the law but did not keep it. The primary lesson of this account is simple: Eternal consequences depend on the choices we make and the kind of people we are.

Lazarus is described as having an intimate relationship with Abraham (verse 22); that is, he is an heir to God’s Kingdom through the promises made to Abraham. We know from other scriptures that Abraham has not yet received his promised inheritance (Acts 7:2-5; Hebrews 11:8-13). Therefore, neither could Lazarus have yet received any eternal inheritance.

The rich man is said to have died. When resurrected from his grave (hades), the rich man learns that his fate is his destruction by fire. The torment he experiences (verses 23-24) is his mental anguish. He has lost everything by rejecting Jesus Christ and refusing to obey God. The “great gulf” between them (verse 26) represents their different rewards. Lazarus will receive eternal life, and the rich man will be destroyed in the lake of fire.

Since there is no consciousness in death, the rich man would have had no awareness of the passing of time since his demise. The conversation with Abraham is not literal. It is a parable that allegorically teaches an important lesson. The rich man, facing eternal destruction because of the choices he made in life, urgently requests that at least his family members be warned so they can avoid his terrible fate (verses 27-31).

But the conclusion of the parable is that ample warning about the consequences of sin is already given in God’s Word. Those who won’t listen to that warning would not listen even to someone who rose from the dead. Only a short time after Jesus spoke this parable He was crucified and then rose from the dead. Those who refused to be warned by Moses and the prophets still refused to believe, even after Christ’s resurrection.

This parable teaches us that choosing to reject God’s instruction will bring disastrous consequences- everlasting destruction in a lake of fire.

Eternal PunishMENT Not Eternal PunishING

Gehenna was a place of DESTRUCTION and DEATH - not a place of living torture! Jesus was talking to Jews who understood all about this Gehenna or Valley of Hinnom. Utter DESTRUCTION by fire was complete. NOTHING was left, but ashes!

The PUNISHMENT is DEATH. It is the *second* death, from which there shall be no resurrection! The PUNISHMENT is for ETERNITY - DEATH for eternity - ETERNAL punishment - but NO where does THE BIBLE say anything about the PAGAN teaching of eternal punishING. It’s eternal punishMENT, *not* eternal punishING!

When Jesus spoke of being cast into “gehenna FIRE,” he was using this expression as an illustration of the LAKE OF FIRE, which THE BIBLE reveals is to be THE PLACE of this final punishment - this second DEATH. He referred to Revelation 20:14: “And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.” THAT fire will be much *hotter* than Dante’s imaginary HELL! (*From To Hell and Back*).

Meaning of Punishment- The word punishment in the Greek is “Kolasis.” Moulton and Milligan’s Vocabulary of the Greek Testament shows that the word was used at the time with the meaning of “pruning” or “cutting down” of dead wood. If this is the meaning here, it reflects the Old Testament phrase “ shall be cut off from his people” (Ex 30:33, 38; Lev 7:20). This would mean that “eternal punishment” of the *wicked consists in their being permanently cut off from mankind*.

“As a final observation, it is important to remember that the only way the *punishment of the wicked could be inflicted eternally is if God resurrected them with immortal life so that they could be indestructible*. But according to the scripture, only God possesses immortality in himself (1 Tim 1:17; 6:16). He gives immortality as a gift of the Gospel (2 Tim 1:10). In the best known text of the Bible, *we are told that those who do not ‘believe in him’ will ‘perish [apoletai],’ INSTEAD OF receiving ‘eternal life’ (John 3:16)*. The ultimate fate of the lost is destruction by eternal fire and not punishment by eternal torment. *The notion of eternal torment of the wicked can only be defended by accepting the Greek view of the immortality and indestructibility of the soul, a concept which we have found to be foreign in scripture*” (Immortality or Resurrection, 209, emphasis added).

Bacchiocchi also argues that, “Traditionalist read ‘eternal punishment’ as ‘eternal punishing,’ but this is not the meaning of the phrase. As Basil Atkinson keenly observes, ‘When the adjective *aionios* meaning ‘everlasting’ is used in the Greek with nouns of action it has reference to the RESULT OF THE ACTION, NOT THE PROCESS. Thus the Phrase ‘everlasting punishment’ is comparable to ‘everlasting redemption’ and ‘everlasting salvation,’ both scriptural phrases. No one supposes that we are being redeemed or being saved forever. We are redeemed and saved ONCE and for all by Christ with *eternal results*. In the same way the lost will not be passing through a process of punishment forever but will be punished ONCE AND FOR ALL WITH ETERNAL RESULTS...A fitting example of this is found in 2 Thessalonians 1:9, where Paul speaking of those who reject the Gospel, says: “ They shall suffer the *punishment of eternal destruction and exclusion from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might*.’ It is evident that the destruction of the wicked cannot be eternal in its duration, because it is difficult to imagine an eternal, inconclusive process of destruction. Destruction presupposes annihilation. The destruction of the wicked is eternal-*aionios*, not because the process of destruction continues forever, but because the *results are permanent*. In the same way, the ‘eternal punishment’ of Matthew 25:46 is eternal because its results are permanent. Its a punishment that results in their eternal destruction or annihilation” (ibid, p.207, emphasis mine and theirs).

Eternal Fire

What does Jesus mean when he refers to “eternal fire”? example Matthew 18:8. People argue that the fires of hell are eternal therefore the punishment is eternal as well, see also Matthew 25:41, 46. John Stott points out, “The fire itself is termed ‘eternal’ and ‘unquenchable,’ but it would be very odd if what is thrown into it proves indestructible *Our expectation would be the opposite: it would be consumed forever, not tormented forever*. Hence is the smoke (evidence that the fire had done its

work) which ‘rises forever and ever’ (Rev 14:11; cf.19:3)” (A Liberal Evangelical Dialogue, p.316, emphasis added).

The fire “eternal-aionios” means not the endless duration but its *complete consumption and annihilation of the wicked*. This is indicated clearly by the fact that the lake of fire, in which the wicked are thrown, is called explicitly “the second death” (Rev 20:14; 21:8), *because it causes the final, radical, and irreversible extinction of life*.

Jude 5-7? Does this scripture in Jude prove a Hell fire of torment?

“I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.

“And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

“Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.”

First, Jude 5-7, Jude compares *human apostates* with (1) the unbelieving Israelites who were saved from Egypt, (2) the angels who rebelled, and (3) the men of Sodom and Gomorrah. Jude was not saying that the angels of verse 6 had “gone after strange flesh” as the Sodomites had done; he was saying that the human apostates (the “certain men” of verse 4) were like Sodom and Gomorrah in that they had “given themselves over to sexual immorality and gone after strange flesh” (verse 7). Notice in verse 5 the unbelieving Israelites were “destroyed,” not tormented forever. The cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were also “destroyed” Genesis 19:29. Everything was burnt up by the “eternal fire” which we have proved is *complete consumption and annihilation of the wicked, which the bible plainly says happened to them*. As for the angels these are the same angels that are in a condition of restraint that Peter spoke of: “For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell [Tartaroo see above], and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;” (2 Peter 2:4). Notice in both scriptures of Jude and Peter they are “reserved” for judgement, and at that time be thrown into the lake of fire “prepared for the devil and his angels:” (Matthew 25:41). Since they are not physical but spirit beings they, with the devil will be “***be tormented day and night for ever and ever***” (Rev 20:10). This is their fate not man’s. Also notice not one part of any of these scriptures show that man is tormented forever ***but are burnt up and destroyed! And the whole context of the scripture was not focused on the angels anyway but the human apostates and the fate of them. The angels were just mentioned because the apostates committed the same sins as those fallen angels that rebelled against God.***

Origins of Hell

“Of all poets of modern times, Dante Alighieri was, perhaps, the greatest educator. He possibly had a greater influence on the course of civilization than any other one man since his day. [He] wrote, in incomprehensible verse, an imaginative and lurid account of a dismal journey through a lurid hell - a long poem containing certain phrases which have caught the attention of the world, such as,

‘All hope abandon, Ye, who enter here.’ “ This had a tremendous impression and influence on the popular Christian thought and teaching. His *Inferno* was based on Virgil and Plato.

Dante is reported to have been so fascinated and enraptured by the ideas and philosophies of Plato and Virgil, pagan philosophers, that he believed they were divinely inspired. Here is a comment on Virgil, from the *Americana*: “VIRGIL, pagan Roman poet, 70-19 B.C. Belonged to the national school of pagan Roman thought, influenced by the Greek writers. Christians of the Middle Ages, including Dante, believed he had received some measure of divine inspiration.”

Plato was a pagan Greek philosopher, born in Athens, 427 B.C., a student of Socrates. He wrote the famous book *Phaedo*, on the immortality of the soul, and *this* book is the real origin of the modern belief in the immortality of the soul.

There is the general statement of the popular belief about hell, and where that belief came from - actually from the imaginations of pagans who knew not God!

The Devil wants you to Believe *his* Fate is Yours

Who is really supposed to go into a place of everlasting torment? Humans? Or Satan the devil? Jesus said: “Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, *into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:*” (Matthew 25:41). The Lake of Fire is a place for the Devil and his angels. God does not want men to go here: “Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4). Originally this place was for Satan and his angels. And it is Satan NOT Man that will be tormented forever, because spirit beings cannot burn up: “And the devil that deceived them was *cast into the lake of fire and brimstone...and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever*” (Rev 20:10). Here is the great deception Satan wants everyone to believe, that YOUR FATE IS THE SAME AS HIS FATE, and it is simply not true! He will be tormented. Unrepented sinners (wicked human beings) will be “**be stubble:** and the day that cometh shall **burn them up**, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch...they shall be **ashes** under the soles of your feet” (Mal 4:1,3). Burn up not tormented forever.

The wages of sin is death, says Romans 6:23. Not the wages of sin is everlasting life of torments in hell. When you look at how God deals with sin. He lets the punishment suit the crime. “Eye for an eye...life for life” (Ex 21:24). God doesn’t over due it by punishing people forever and ever. Can you imagine a God who says “God is love,” (1 John 4:8), do something like that to creatures he calls his “sons and daughters.” “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?” (Matthew 7:11). We being evil don’t do that to our own children, then why would God *being Good* do something so horrible like that to his own?

Written by Peter Salemi